A. F. of L. vs. C.I.O. by Robert Holmes

NEW MASSES

1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

China's Communists Told Me

A Journey to the Home of the Famous New Eighth Route Army

By Philip J. Jaffe

TWO DOZEN PHOTOGRAPHS

Trends in American Literature

A Discussion of Naturalism, Realism, Pessimism, and Other Things

Granville Hicks
Horace Gregory
Muriel Rukeyser
Marshall Schacht

The French Elections

The Present Position and Outlook of the Popular Front

Paul Nizan

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

SOME time back we reported that ex-editor Edwin Rolfe had become editor of the *Volunteer for Liberty*, organ of the international brigades fighting for the loyalists in Spain. We have received a copy of one of the September issues, and were pleased to see that Darryl Frederick's map which accompanied one of Theodore Draper's recent analyses of the Far East situation had been reproduced in the *Volunteer*. The leading article is by Leland Stowe, correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune*, and the issue carries a poem, "Roar, China!" by Langston Hughes. A drawing by John Groth that appeared in the NEW MASSES is also reproduced.

By way of aftermath to our recent symposium on humor and satire comes the following letter:

"A few numbers back the NEW MASSES staged a saturnalia on the subject 'Is Laughter a Weapon?' Now I don't know if any conclusion was reached. I do know I waded through every line of that discussion and I damn near died. Tonight I have read Margaret Wright Mather's article 'Governor Hurley—Book Salesman.' Ha! Here is proof that tomorrow the sun will shine and the birds will sing. This copy of the NEW MASSES is going to be easy to circulate among my middle-class friends. . . . Margaret, where have you been all my life? I never heard tell of you before."

What's What

THE League of American Writers, Middle Atlantic Group, has announced the second session of its courses for writers. Following the successful inauguration of the courses last spring, when Genevieve Taggard and Rolfe Humphries conducted classes in the writing of poetry, the program has been enlarged to include four courses: (1) Genevieve Taggard will again conduct a poetry course; (2) the writing of juvenile books, given by Marjorie Fischer, author of *Street Fair, Palaces on Monday,* and *Red Feather;* (3) the short story, by Lillian Gilkes, short-story writer and editor; and (4) labor journalism, by Harold Coy, of the Federated Press. The courses will begin about the middle of October and will run for ten weeks. The fee for each course is $5. Each class will meet in the evening, once a week, for an hour and a half or two hours. Applications may be sent to Lillian Gilkes, chairman of the Educational Committee, League of American Writers, Room 516, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, not later than October 12. Applications should be accompanied by a statement as to the student's background, education, and interests, and by one fairly short sample of his writing. Classes in the course on juvenile books will be limited to ten students; in the other courses to twenty-five students. The poetry course will be limited to applicants between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five whose work is unpublished, except in school or college magazines.

Readers living in the New York area should make an entry in their date-books. On Sunday evening, November 14, Anna Sokolow, brilliant young revolutionary dancer whose recitals last season excited much favorable comment, will appear with her group at the Guild Theater, New York. The performance, which will be Miss Sokolow's Broadway debut, will be under the auspices of the NEW MASSES. An ad on page 27 gives the details.

Organizations interested in arranging affairs commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Russian revolution will be interested to know that the American Russian Institute, 56 West 45th Street, New York City, has available for loan several exhibits on the Soviet Union. The only charges are shipping costs. A general exhibit on the U.S.S.R. of 1937, made up in Moscow this year, uses as its basis quotations from the new constitution. Such subjects as industry, agriculture, minor nationalities, and the position of the individual are covered. An exhibit on women and children has charts and photographic material on medical consultations; the position of women; the children's playgrounds; nursery schools and kindergartens. Other exhibits suitable for panel space are on architecture, Soviet photographic art, and other subjects. For further details write the American Russian Institute.

Michael Gold, Ben Field, Angelo Herndon, and others will participate in an "author's day" at the Workers' Bookshop in New York, Friday, October 8. At 4 p.m. they will give brief talks on their books.

Local 56, Workers' Alliance of America (the organization of the unemployed) write that they are anxious to relieve the "unemployment" of their librarian and library staff by giving them a library to take care of. Local 56, 207 East 120th Street, New York, would like readers to inform them about unwanted books, periodicals, pamphlets, songs, and pictures for this purpose. Address Edward St. Louis at the local's headquarters, and he will make arrangements for picking up the material.

Next week the NEW MASSES will start publishing Joshua Kunitz's series on the present state of affairs in the Soviet Union. Kunitz, who has just returned from a two-year stay in the U.S.S.R., has a wealth of material bearing on those matters which the capitalist press has recently been distorting. Next week's issue will also contain a definitive analysis of the proceedings of the current A. F. of L convention by William F. Dunne, veteran labor organizer and Communist, who is present at the Denver convention. Other articles to watch for next week and later: (1) a report by Joseph Lash, president of the American Student Union, on recent political developments in loyalist Spain, whence he has just returned; (2) a memorial article on John Reed, whose birth and death both fell in the third week of October, by his biographer, Granville Hicks; (3) a follow-up article on the U. S. constitution by Louis B. Boudin, discussing the question of whether the constitution is a "class document" or whether progressives can whole-heartedly support it today.

THIS WEEK

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Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification direct to us rather than to the post office will give the best results.

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Warning! Readers should note that the United States Post Office has recently returned to senders mail addressed to Jan Van Galen, Bulb Grower, Vogelenzang near Haarlem, Holland. The addressee has been advertising in the NEW MASSES and other periodicals, offering 350 assorted bulbs for $1. The Post Office returned such mail with the notation "Fraudulent." This advertising will of course not appear in our columns in the future.

Who's Who

PHILIP J. JAFFE is managing editor of *Amerasia,* a monthly devoted to the problems confronting the peoples of the Pacific Powers. He spent four months in the former Soviet regions in China, and enjoyed personal contact with the leading political and military figures there. He was accompanied on his trip by T. A. Bisson of the Foreign Policy Association and Owen Lattimore, editor of *Pacific Affairs.* . . . Paul Nizan, Paris correspondent of the NEW MASSES, was formerly a member of the staff of *L'Humanité,* organ of the French Communist Party. He is now co-editor of *Les Cahiers de la Jeunesse,* a youth-movement periodical. . . . Robert Holmes is a San Franciscan who is a close student of the West Coast labor movement, concerning which he has written for us before. . . . Harry Sternberg, whose lithograph appears on page 19 of this issue, has been having a show of drawings of the coal and steel regions—the work and workers—at the Frederick Keppel galleries in New York. The exhibition closes this week-end. . . . Jack Markow, who did the drawing which appears on page 12, will exhibit lithographs and drawings at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York City, from October 10 to October 23. . . . Jenny Ballou is the author of the current prize-winning Harper novel *Spanish Prelude.* . . . Paul Schilling is the criminology specialist for one of the major broadcasting companies. . . . Milton Meltzer has contributed reviews to our pages before.

Flashbacks

A TRAINLOAD of scabs was driven from Virden, Ill., by striking miners in a rifle and machine-gun battle, October 12, 1898. This marked the end of scabbing in Illinois mine strikes for twenty-four years. . . . "His imperturbably serene nature makes him one of the greatest satirists of all time," estimated Marxian Socialist Engels of Utopian Socialist Fourier who died a century ago, October 10, 1837. "Still more masterly is his criticism of the bourgeois form of the relation between the sexes. But Fourier is at his greatest in his conception of the history of society. He uses the dialectic method in the same way as Hegel." Such *praise is good basis for a centenary* celebration. . . . The anniversary of the death of another great Socialist occurs this week. Gene Debs, beloved leader and revolutionary, died October 12, 1926. . . . "You are carrying on splendid propaganda for my anti-militarist ideas," said Karl Liebknecht to a German court trying him for anti-war activities on October 10, 1917. . . . One of the early Negro leaders of slave revolts in this country, Gabriel Prosser, was executed, October 7, 1800.

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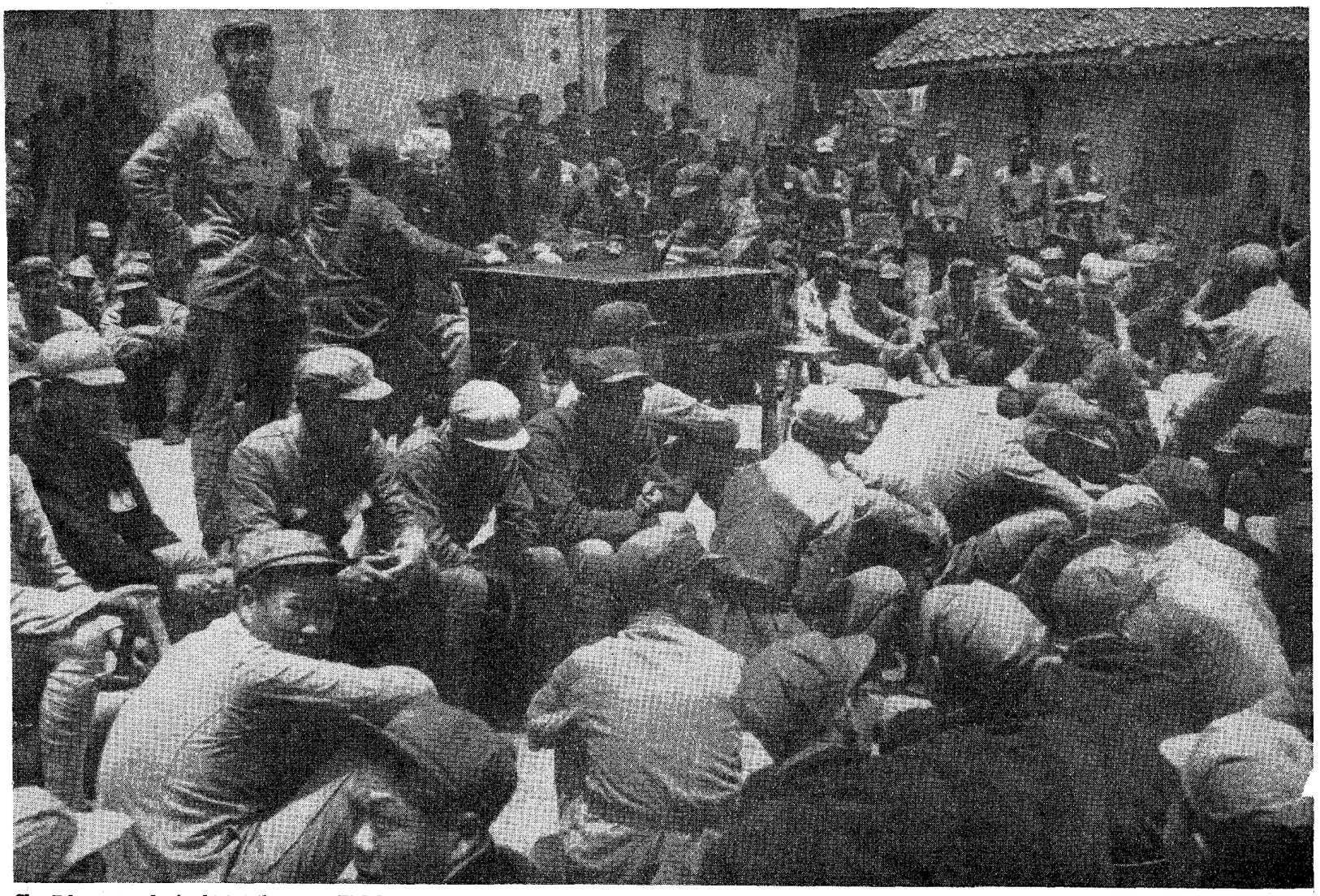
NEW MASSES
OCTOBER 12, 1937



Chu Teh, commander-in-chief of the present Eighth Route Army, addressing a meeting of cadets. The author, white hair and all, is seated at the table listening to the translator.

China's Communists Told Me

A specialist in Far Eastern affairs interviews the leading men of Red China in their home territories

By Philip J. Jaffe

FIFTEEN days before Japanese troops opened fire on a Chinese garrison near Peiping, I was seated in the one bare room which is the home of Mao Tse-tung, the political leader of the Chinese Communist Party. In the course of the interview Mao Tse-tung said to me: "Japan cannot stop now. Japan wants to swallow China. Its next step will not be long delayed. You ask about the future of the united front? The united front is inevitable because Japan's invasion farther into the heart of China is inevitable."

Twenty-four hours later, in the military headquarters of the former Chinese Red Army, only two big rooms, walls covered with huge military maps, I asked the most famous of the Communist commanders, General Chu Teh: "Why do you think that General Chiang Kai-shek will have to accept the aid of the Red Army?"

Chu Teh replied: "A form of the united front has now existed for several months and has resulted in a large measure of internal peace. The Chinese bourgeoisie, however, is not easily able to forget its ten-year fight against the Red Army. But when the war with Japan eventually begins, it will not be a question of what the bourgeoisie wants; they will have to have the Red Army. In a war with Japan, it will not only be a question of regular troops. China must also depend on its peasants and workers whom the Communists alone can lead. It is not merely the numbers of the army which count; it is the mass population as well. If Chiang Kai-shek thinks that he can raise a large army to fight Japan, without at the same time enrolling the masses as the backbone of the struggle, then he will be rudely disappointed. No war against Japan can be successful without a correct organization of the peasants and workers, and this only the Red Army can successfully carry out."

Two weeks later I knew that the prophecy made by the two famous leaders of the former Chinese Red Army had been fulfilled. On July 7, Japan invaded North China. On August 22, the first stage of the united front

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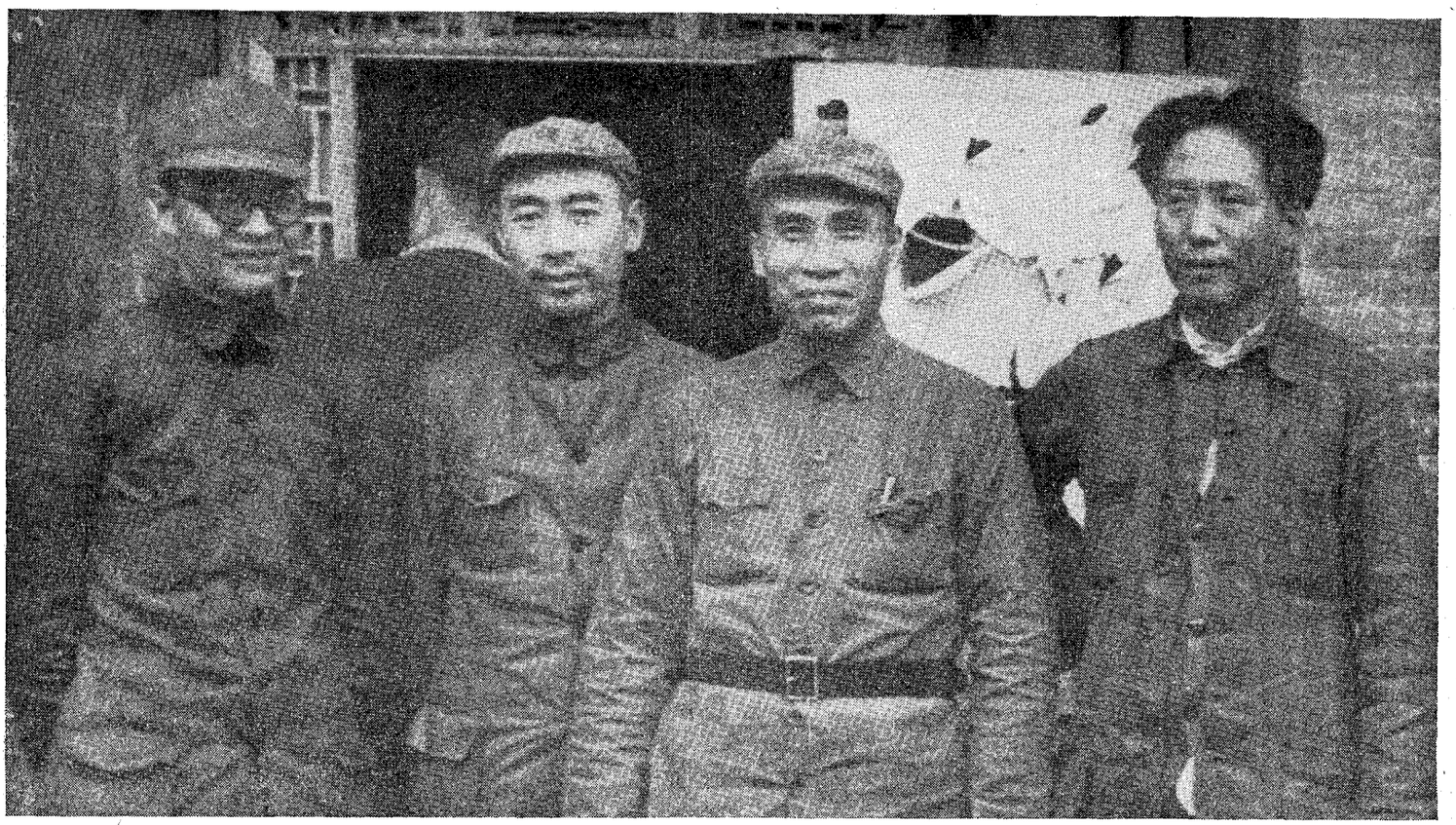
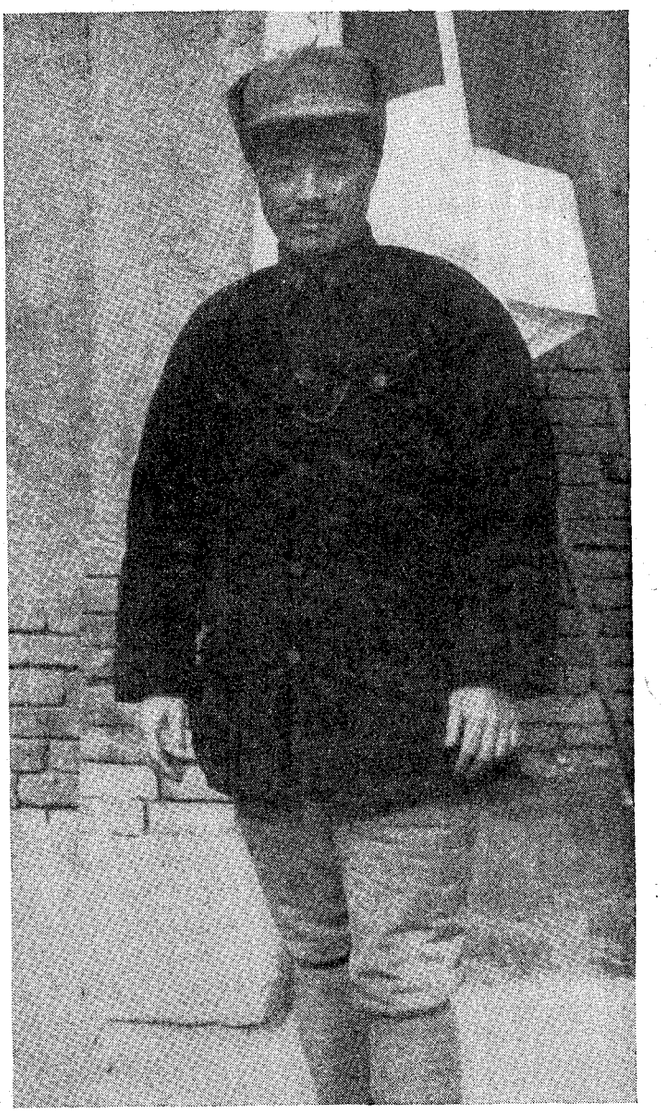


Six of the Outstanding Leaders of the Chinese Eighth Route Army

Above, a unique group photograph, left to right: Po K'u, an important Communist official; Chou En-lai, now representing the Eighth Route Army on the General Staff in Nanking; Chu Teh, commander-in-chief of the Eighth Route Army, and Mao Tse-tung, now governor of the Special Administrative District. Standing at the right is Ho Long, commander-in-chief of the Second Front Anti-Japanese Red Army, a famous Communist military strategist. Below, Lin Piao, director of the Anti-Japanese Political and Military University in Yenan, graduate of the famous Whampoa Military Academy and for many years commander of the First Front Anti-Japanese Red Army.



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—that of military coöperation—was concluded between the Nanking and Red Armies. In the words of the official *communiqué* from Nanking, "the Chinese government and the Communist army have been fighting for the last ten years; this is the official conclusion of the war." Mao Tse-tung has since been appointed governor of the former Soviet region, now renamed the Special Administrative District. Chu Teh has been appointed commander-in-chief of the former Red Army, now called the Eighth Route Army. Chou En-lai, another outstanding Communist with whom I spoke, is the official Communist representative on the general staff in Nanking.

Mao Tse-tung, political leader: Yenan is the capital of the former Soviet region. On June 21, after four days' travel from Sian, the capital of Shensi province, scene of the Chiang Kai-shek incident of last December, through semi-starved villages, on bridgeless rivers and roads deep with gullies, we finally passed through the beautiful, ancient main gate of Yenan. We were greeted at the gate by Agnes Smedley, the distinguished American writer and an old friend of the Chinese people. While in Yenan, our party which included beside myself, T. A. Bisson of the Foreign Policy Association, and Owen Lattimore, editor of *Pacific Affairs,* stayed at the Foreign Office. The building was soon buzzing with excitement. We had barely finished our first dinner in Yenan, when guests arrived: Ting Ling, China's foremost woman writer; Li Li-san, an old associate of Dr. Sun Yat-sen; the only two non-Chinese then in the region, Agnes Smedley and Peggy Snow, wife of the American writer, Edgar Snow, and many Communist leaders. Before long, we were talking and singing in a variety of languages. In the midst of our animated discussion, somebody entered quietly and sat down. "Comrade Mao," someone said—Mao Tse-tung, the political leader of the then Chinese Soviet Government.

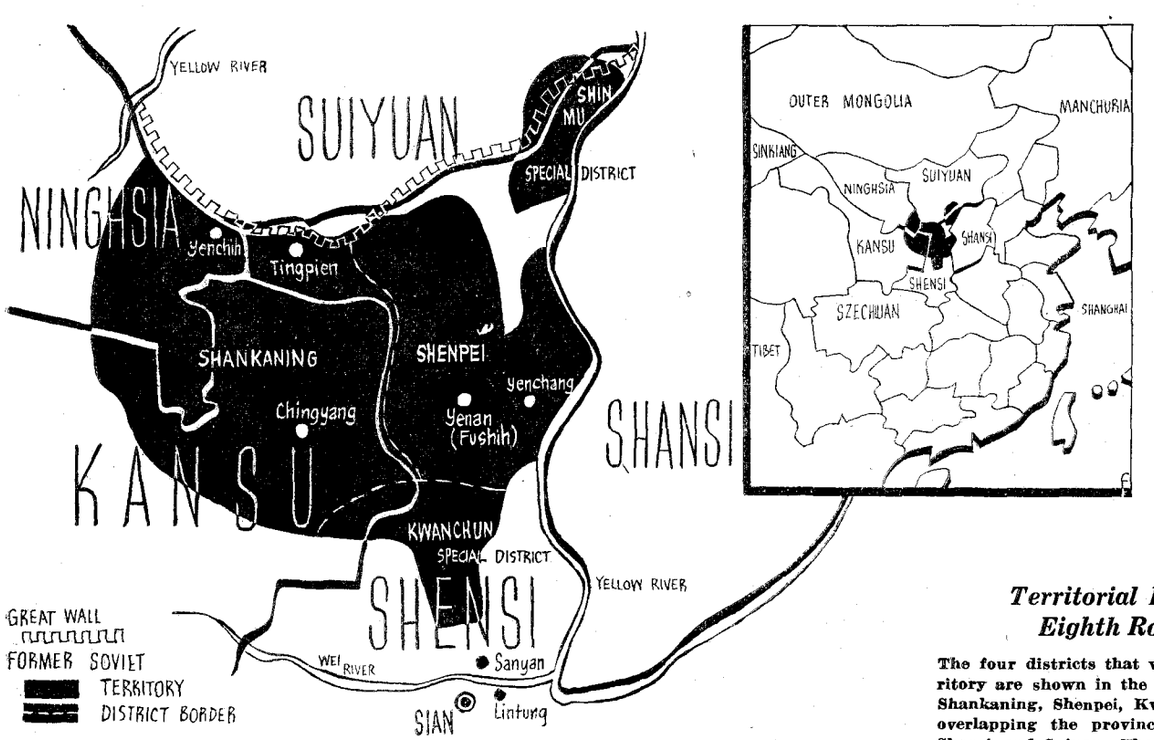
We spent many hours with him after that evening—at interviews, during meals, at the theater—and we were increasingly impressed by the complete sincerity and lack of ostentation that is so typical of him and of the other leaders we saw. It was during these visits that we grew to feel his tremendous force, a force likely to be overlooked at first because of the low, even voice, the quiet restraint of his movements, and the beautiful hands, almost too delicate for a soldier, but so dexterous with the writing brush. But the quiet voice speaks with brilliance and authority, the movements of the tall slim body with slightly stooped shoulders are sure and well coördinated. Like all other Red Army commanders, Mao wears exactly the same uniform as the rank-and-file soldiers, eats the same food, sleeps on the same sort of *k'ang* (a low, long bed of stone), avoids all social ceremonies, and altogether lives an extremely simple life. It becomes easy to understand the tremendous personal appeal which Mao has as a leader. This leadership dates from the first organizational meeting of the committee which organized the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai in 1920. Mao was an important figure at that meeting.

Our interviews with Mao Tse-tung were many and on a host of topics: the evolution of Nanking's policy; the inner political struggle within Nanking; the Sian incident; the united front; the student movement; the role of other powers in Far Eastern affairs; and the perspectives of China's future development, etc. But since Mao Tse-tung asked me to transmit a message to the American people, it is perhaps best to confine his remarks to those concerning America and its isolationist policy.

"Though there are many Americans who are isolationist in principle," he began, "America is not and cannot be isolationist. America is in this respect like other capitalist countries: part proletariat, part capitalist. Neither one nor the other can be isolationist. Capitalism in the imperialist countries is world-wide, and so is the problem of liberation which needs the effort of the world proletariat. Not only does China need the help of the American proletariat, but the American proletariat also needs the help of the Chinese peasants and workers. The relation of American capitalism to China is similar to that of other capitalist countries. These countries have common interests as well as conflicting ones—common in that they all exploit China, conflicting in that each wants what the other has, as exemplified by the conflict between Great Britain and the United States, as well as between Japan, Britain, and the United States. If China is subjugated by Japan, it will not only be a catastrophe for the Chinese people, but a serious loss to other imperialist powers."

At this point Mao was handed a wireless message announcing both the fall of Bilbao and the resignation of France's premier, Léon Blum. We discussed the probable causes of both these events. Mao clearly showed his grasp of the world situation, despite the isolating distance. We took time off to answer a host of questions, this time by him. What is the comparative strength of the Socialist and Communist Parties in America? Did we know the life-stories of John L. Lewis and Earl Browder? The strength of the American labor unions? The Trotskyites? American official opinion on the Far East?

Then Mao Tse-tung continued: "The Chinese revolution is not an exception, it is one part of the world revolution. It has special characteristics, but fundamentally it is similar to the Spanish, French, American, and British struggles. These struggles are all progressive. Therein lies their similarity. It is this similarity that evokes the broad sympathy



Territorial Home of the Eighth Route Army

The four districts that were formerly Soviet territory are shown in the black areas at the left—Shankaning, Shenpei, Kwanchun, and Shin Mu—overlapping the provinces of Ninghsia, Kansu, Shensi, and Suiyan. The smaller insert shows the same area and its relation to the rest of China.

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of the American masses and their concern with the fate of the Chinese people. We, on our part, are also concerned with the fate of the American people. Please convey this message to your people. The difference between our peoples lies in this: the Chinese people, unlike the Americans, are oppressed by outside invaders. The American people are, of course, oppressed from the inside, but not by feudal forces. It is the hope common to all of us that our two countries shall work together."

Chu Teh, military leader: Though Chu Teh is known to the outside world for his military exploits, his other activities are many and varied. We first met Chu Teh in a class he was teaching on the "Fundamental Problems of the Chinese Revolution." Wearing spectacles, he could very well have been mistaken for a professional teacher. At the People's Anti-Japanese Military Political University at Yenan, he teaches both military tactics and Marxist-Leninist principles. From 1922 to 1925, Chu Teh studied political and economic science, philosophy, and military strategy in Germany. As a result he speaks German freely. His favorite recreations are reading, conversation, horseback riding, and basketball. The latter sport is a subject for much fun among the troops. His love for the game is greater than his ability and he can often be found hanging about a group which is choosing sides. If he is not picked, he quietly moves on to the next court in the hope that there his luck will turn. My greatest disappointment at Yenan was that rain ruined an appointment we had to play basketball with him.

Chu Teh, commander-in-chief of the Eighth Route Army, is the personification of the spirit of these armies which for ten years have been continuously victorious in the face of overwhelming odds. His career has been devoted mainly to the military side of revolutionary activities. Fifty-one years old, he has taken part in the entire development of modern China, from the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 to the present struggle against Japan. Beginning with August 1, 1927, when, together with another famous Red commander, Ho Lung, he organized the Nanchang uprising, he participated in exploits which have now become legend. In November 1931, the first All-Soviet Congress in Juikin, Kiangsi, bestowed upon him the title of commander-in-chief of the army. Even in Nanking I heard many call Chu Teh the greatest military genius in all China.

There is strength and assurance in that square, stocky figure, in that strong peasant face, weather-beaten by a life of campaigning, and in those small bright eyes which are quite hidden when he laughs, and he laughs frequently. We took a picture of him standing with legs apart and hands on hips. That is Chu Teh.

"The Red Army in this region under our direct command numbers about ninety thousand," he began. "This force occupies a contiguous territory extending from North Shensi to East Kansu and South Ninghsia. From Yenan to Sanyan there are some partisan troops in Kuomintang uniforms. In this region professional full-time partisans number from ten to twenty thousand. The number of part-time partisans is much larger; their duties are to maintain order in their districts.

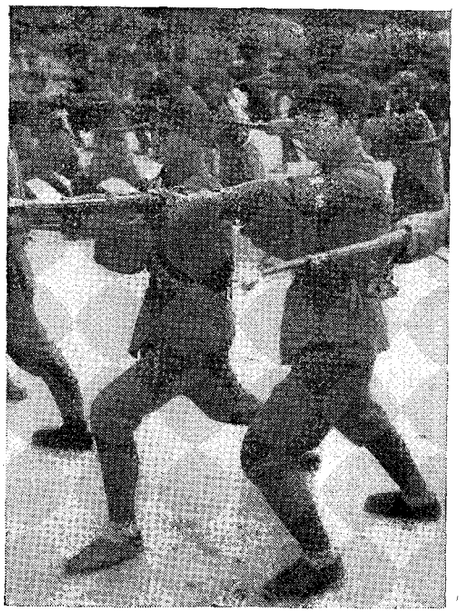
"Of the ninety thousand regular troops here, only twenty to thirty thousand come from the original Kiangsi district. About thirty thousand were recruited on the way, chiefly in Szechwan, and the rest are from local areas.

"In other partisan areas there are various groups numbering from one to three thousand soldiers, but it is hard to estimate the total figure; we ourselves are not certain about this. These partisan areas are located in southern Shensi (southwest of Sian), the Fukien-Kiangsi border, the Honan-Hupeh-Anhwei border, northeastern Kiangsi, the Hunan-Hupeh-Kiangsi border, the Kwangtung-Hunan border, the Kiangsi-Hunan border, and the Shensi-Szechwan border. Connections with several of these are still maintained, but not with all; and these connections are irregular and uncertain." Asked if we might publish this, Chu Teh replied: "It doesn't matter. The fact is well known throughout China."

Having seen many Red troops carrying on their maneuvers with excellent new rifles, machine guns, automatic rifles, and the ubiquitous Mausers, we were curious to know how well armed they were as a whole. Chu Teh replied, "Our regular ninety thousand troops in the Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia region are in general well armed. Other equipment, such as clothes, food, and supplies, is not satisfactory. Although it greatly improved after the Sian incident, it is still far from sufficient. Though we had established contact with Chang Hsueh-liang before the Sian affair, it was only during the two weeks following the actual incident that any large quantity of munitions, clothing, and food reached us."

As Chu Teh continued the conversation, punctuated frequently by his broad, genial smile, he came to the discussion of his well-known theory of the military tactics necessary to defeat Japan, namely, to avoid decisive engagements in the early stages in favor of guerrilla tactics to encircle the enemy and harass it until its morale was shattered. We wanted to know something about the Manchurian volunteers. Were they really well organized or were they mere hungry "bandits"?

"At first," Chu Teh said, "the Manchurian volunteers were largely impoverished peasants and the scattered remnants of the defeated Manchurian troops. They operated without a plan, could not accomplish much, and finally were almost destroyed. The Communist Party then began to organize new peasant detachments who were later joined by what remained of the original volunteers. As a result, most of these formerly leaderless forces have been converted into important detachments with wide popular support. This year there has been some increase in the number of volunteers along the Korean border, in eastern Fengtien, and in eastern Kirin. The increase has been more systematic than hitherto.



Troops at drill.

Waiting to advance.

Men of the Eighth Route Army.

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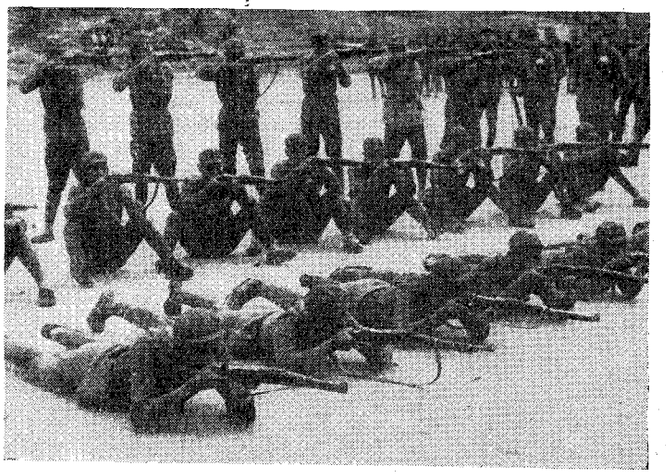
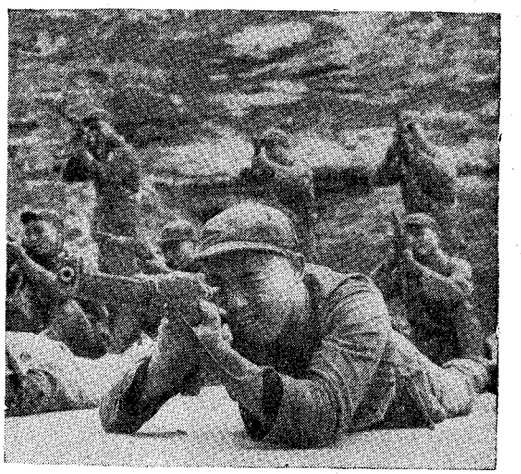
Troops marching through the main gate of Yenan to their drill grounds. The crouching figure with the camera is Owen Lattimore, editor of *Pacific Affairs*.

Bugle boys.

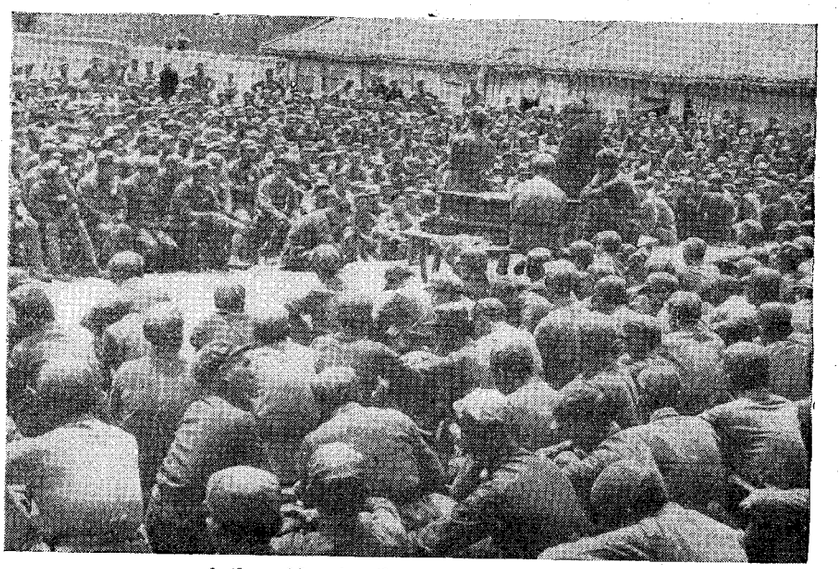


Target practice: prone, sitting, and standing.



Fire!

Cavalry on their tough, shaggy Mongolian ponies.



Author addressing the mass meeting of cadets.

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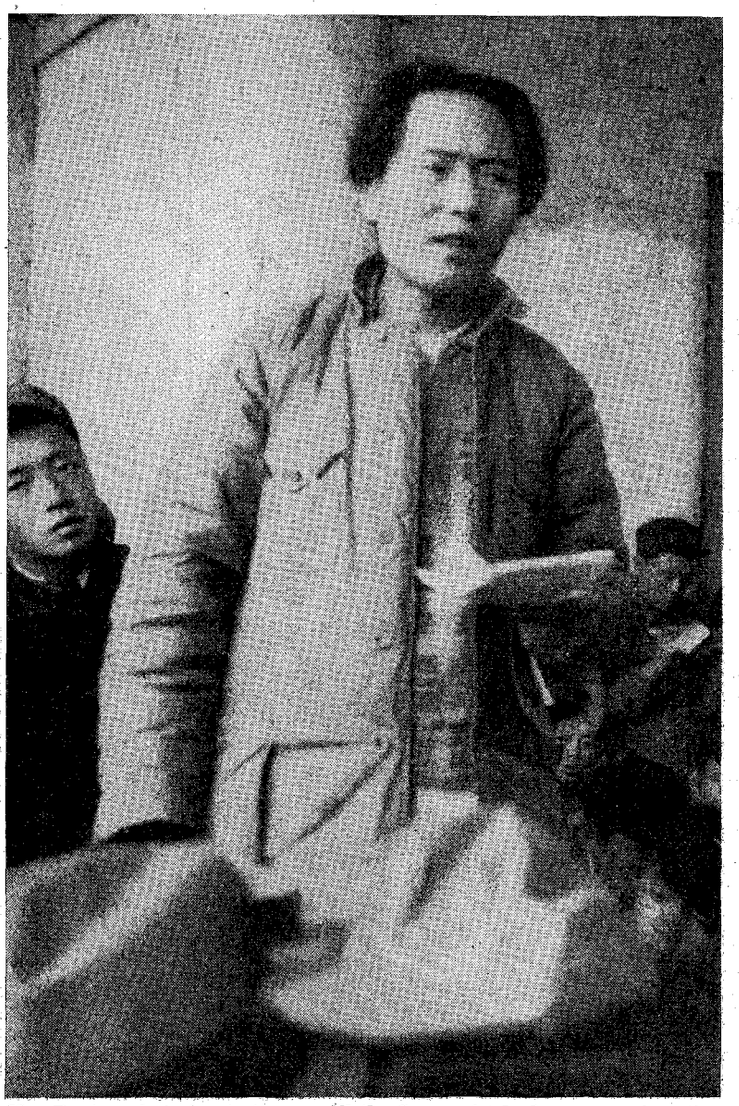
New groups have recently been formed in Jehol and Chahar. About three months ago a report to me stated that the total number of Manchurian volunteers ranged from fifty to sixty thousand." In reply to a statement made by the Japanese to the effect that 70 percent of the Manchurian volunteers are Communists, Chu Teh said that this was not an exaggeration.

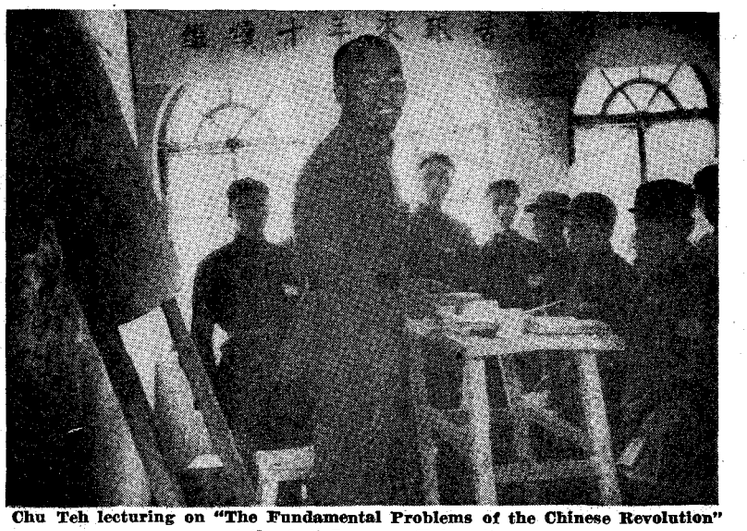
On the united front: Of all the questions facing China and the former Soviet area the most important is that of the united front. No one in Soviet China knows the details of the negotiations more intimately than Chou En-lai, vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, and second in importance only to Mao Tse-tung. It was he who carried on all the negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek. Born thirty-nine years ago of a mandarin family, Chou En-lai joined the revolutionary movement in 1911. Upon his return to China in 1924 from a stay abroad, he became chief of the political department of the Whampoa Military Academy under the direction of Chiang Kai-shek. It is said that even today the generalissimo has a great fondness for Chou. When asked why the united-front conversations were then not moving very fast, Chou En-lai said: "The form of the Chinese united front is quite different from that in Europe or the United States. In China two parties fought each other for ten years. The Communist Party representing the proletariat and peasantry was a revolutionary party with its own areas and military forces as well as its own social, political, and economic system. The Kuomintang represented the ruling social groups throughout the rest of China. But the position of the Chinese bourgeoisie was such that the obstacles arising from their class position could not forever bar a united struggle against Japan. The bourgeoisie of China have at last come to realize that the Japanese invasion harms all classes and that, standing alone, they are too weak to safeguard China's freedom and independence."

Up to the time of Japan's most recent invasion, the united-front negotiations had progressed quite slowly though not without positive results. Internal peace had been achieved, and the two armies no longer fought each other. Confiscation of land in the Soviet regions was abolished. The name of the Red Army was changed. Dramatic troupes began to tour the countryside to teach the peasants the meaning of democratic elections. Nanking began to contribute a considerable, though as yet insufficient, sum of money monthly to the Soviet area. Technical difficulties made a complete united front often seem impossible. But Japan's military aggression scattered all the major obstacles.

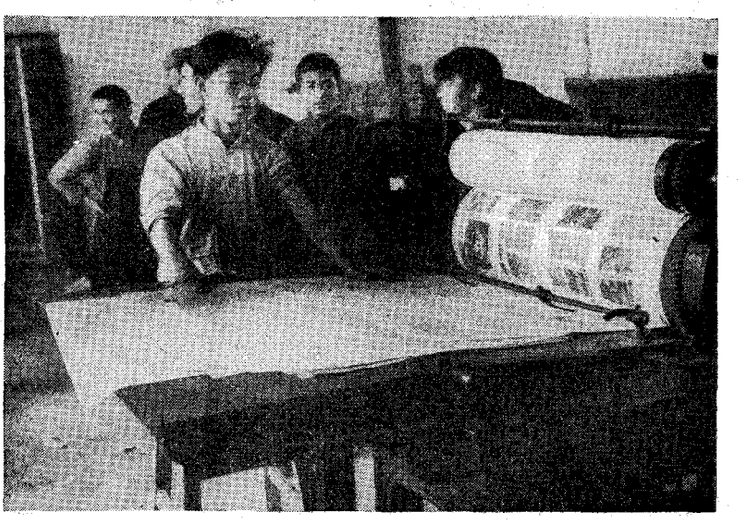
The land problem: Ever since October 1935, when the main body of the Communist armies from Central and South China began to arrive in north Shensi, their immediate objectives have been twofold. First, to build a permanent base for internal development, and second and more important, to use this base as a spearhead for unifying all elements in China for a successful war of defense against the invading Japanese militarists. Despite the fact that the former Soviet area, the largest single contiguous territory ever held under Communist rule, started as one of the most economically backward areas in China, the welfare of the peasants and workers has been improved considerably. There is not sufficient room here to tell all that we saw and heard, but a few high spots, in the words of Po K'u, one of the important leaders of the region, will perhaps shed some light.



Mao Tse-tung lecturing to troops. All the Communist leaders engage in active educational work in the army.



Chu Teh lecturing on "The Fundamental Problems of the Chinese Revolution" at the Anti-Japanese University.



Men operating a printing press recently installed in Yenan, where the daily newspaper is run off.

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Po K'u's home and office is in the abandoned compound of an English Baptist mission. When we expressed surprise at finding religious pictures hanging on his walls, Po K'u said that he left the compound just as he found it in the hope that the missionaries would return.

In reply to several questions on the land confiscation problem, Po K'u said in quite good English: "When the first Soviets were established in 1933 in Shensi, all the good land along the river banks was in the hands of rich landlords who used the great famine of 1930 as a lever for confiscating this land. From then until the Sian incident in December 1936, all this land was divided among the peasants; all taxation and levies were abolished; democratic liberty was extended to all; peasants built up their own armed forces for their protection instead of relying on landlords' forces; and peasants enjoyed the aid and direction of the Soviet government to increase production, improve the land, and develop consumer cooperatives.

"After the Sian incident when the united-front conversations had already begun, the redivision of land among the peasants was stopped in districts occupied after the beginning of the negotiations. In general, the ownership of land is not the main problem in this territory. Land is plentiful, for Shensi is thinly populated, with an average of one family to every thirteen miles. The form of exploitation and, therefore, the main problem are usury and excessive interest rates on money and cattle. Land rents and money lending rates, therefore, have been reduced drastically. The maximum rent now permitted in the Soviet areas is 30 percent of the land produce, and peasants can bargain with landlords to further reduce this percentage, while the money-lending rate has been reduced from a general 10 percent monthly rate to a maximum of 2 percent. Even last year, when warfare was still going on, the Soviet government spent one hundred thousand dollars for ploughs, seeds, etc., while this year there will be an additional cash distribution of sixty thousand dollars."

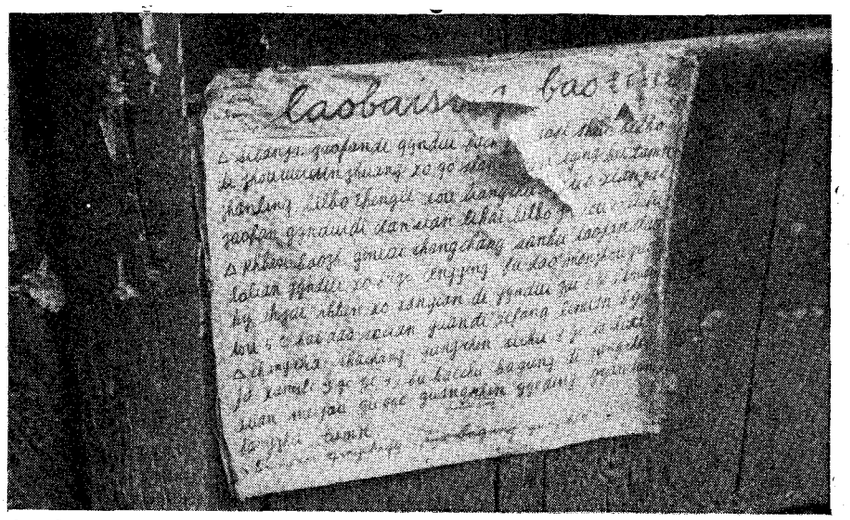
Apparently there has been a great deal of confusion about this abandonment of land confiscation. Mao Tse-tung's pithy words perhaps explain it most simply. He said: "It is not so much a question now of whether our land belongs to the peasants or the landlords, but whether it is Chinese or Japanese." The same reasoning is applied by the Communist leaders to the larger question of China as a whole. To all of them "it is not a question now of which general controls which province, but whether the land will remain Chinese or come under Japanese control. If the latter should happen, the original problem disappears."

Life in the Special Administrative District: Our visit, however, did not consist only of a series of interviews. We visited stores and shops, noting with interest how much cleaner and more orderly they were than any we had seen on our trip, and how relatively well-stocked they were. And the cheesecloth covering the food for sale stood in marked contrast to the cities in non-Soviet areas where the only coverings we had seen were armies of flies. Even the dogs, the most miserable of all living things in China, were active and barking. Anyone who has seen the worm-eaten, starved, gaunt dogs of China, too weak even to move out of the way of a passing vehicle, will understand the meaning of that.

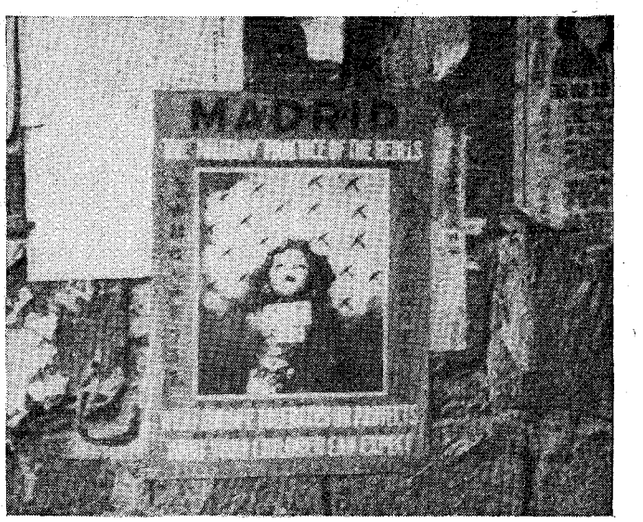
Culturally, too, the Soviet region is making great strides. Besides Yenan, the present capital, three other cities are being developed as cultural centers: Tingpien, Yenchang, and

The children's dance group of the Anti-Japanese Theater in Yenan. They are executing a "Sailors' Hornpipe" at a mass meeting.

Every branch of the former Red Army is accompanied by a group of entertainers. These boys are trained singers.



A wall bulletin in Yenan in romanized Chinese which is encouraged to simplify study of the language.



Spanish poster on the wall of Yenan. One of the most touching scenes encountered by the author.

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Chingyang. Anti-Japanese academies and dramatic groups are the axes around which the cultural life is being developed. Study classes, reading rooms, theatricals, dances, lectures, and mass meetings are regular features of life in the Soviet territories. We were amused to hear the universal complaint of all librarians. "They keep the books out too long."

But most interesting and important of all was our visit to the theater. A troupe of players was scheduled to go on the road the following day, and they graciously went through their repertoire for us as well as for their own delighted audience. In a packed auditorium, seated on low, narrow, backless wooden benches, before a crude stage whose footlights were flickering candles, we sat through four hours of amazingly excellent plays, superbly acted. With perfect realism (so different from the classical Chinese theater) and delightful humor, they presented plays designed to teach the peasants how to vote and how to unite. They explained the value of cleanliness, of vaccination, of education, and the stupidity and danger of superstitions. At one point, for instance, one character complained of being tired. "We weren't tired on our seven thousand-mile march," was the reply. And the audience roared as did Mao, Chu Teh, and the rest of the leaders who sat next to us, having as good a time as anyone. The high spot of the evening was a really professional performance of a scene from Gorki's *Mother,* which had been given at the Gorki memorial evening celebrated in Yenan, and a *Living Newspaper* by the young people on such subjects as bribery, bureaucracy, and hygiene. All these plays were being sent out to the villages.

Some of the women studying to be political and military workers in the Eighth Route Army. Second from the left is the wife of Chu Teh.

Our visit to Yenan was climaxed by a huge mass meeting, addressed by Chu Teh, Bisson, Lattimore, and myself and attended by the one thousand five hundred cadet students of the People's Anti-Japanese Military-Political University and about five hundred from other schools. Here are some questions asked of me. "What is the position of woman in the U.S.A.? How do American workers live and how developed is their movement? What are the results of Roosevelt's N.R.A. campaign? What is the present situation in the Left literary movement in America? What do the American people think of our long march west?" And innumerable questions concerning America's attitude in the event of a Sino-Japanese conflict, the American attitude toward the war in Spain, and what Americans think of the Kuomintang-Communist coöperation.

This stress on the role of the United States is altogether typical of the reaction throughout China. These people have traditionally considered Americans as their friends and they do not want us to fail them now. A few days after our arrival in Shanghai, I received a letter from Agnes Smedley which tells better than I am able how much hope and enthusiasm the visit of Americans evoked in the former Soviet regions.

"In my imagination I follow your journey from here, and my friends and I speculate as to your exact location day by day, and your exact occupation. I want to tell you that you left behind remarkable friends. I did not realize the effect of that meeting until two or three days had passed. Then it began to roll in. I have no reason to tell you tales. But the meeting, and your speech in particular, has had a colossal effect upon all people. One was so moved by it that he could not sleep that night but spent the night writing a poem in praise of you all. I enclose the poem. It is not good from the literary viewpoint. But from the viewpoint of the emotion behind it, it is of value. It is a deeply passionate poem. It is not good enough to publish, but it is good enough to carry next to your heart in the years to come. To that meeting, it may interest you to know, came delegations sent by every institution. Many institutions could not cross the rivers. But they sent activists, groups of six to a dozen. They later gave extensive reports. I am getting those reports from instructors day by day. All are deeply impressed and moved and grateful to you and all of you. There has never been anything like this here before."

Agnes Smedley, the famous American writer. A dispatch to the New York *Herald Tribune* from Shanghai, dated October 2, stated that she had suffered severe spinal injury while accompanying the Eighth Route Army in Shensi. Beside her is an 11-year-old boy who joined up with the Red Army at the age of eight and marched all the way from Szechwan to Shensi in the "heroic trek."

Miss Wu Kuang-wei, reputedly the most beautiful woman in the region, who speaks English perfectly and is also an excellent actress. She played the title role in the performance of Gorki's *Mother* mentioned in the article.

Mme. Sun Yat-sen, wife of the first president of the Chinese Republic. She lives in Shanghai and is one of the foremost champions of the united front. In an interview with the author, she appealed for American aid to the Chinese people.

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The Elections in France

The coming poll for local officials throughout the country finds ever-stronger sentiment for the Popular Front and for labor unity

By Paul Nizan

PARIS.

A FEW days after this issue goes to press, the voters of France will choose representatives for the General Councils (*Conseils Généraux*) throughout the country. The October 10 elections for the departmental governing bodies of France have always been of considerable importance in the nation's politics. Though the personality of the individual candidate is more important here in these elections than in those for the Chamber of Deputies, the election constitutes, without doubt, a major consultation of French public opinion. And let it be added that the general councilors are among the local functionaries who vote for senators; hence, any important shift in the composition of the local councils is afterwards reflected in the membership of the national upper house.

On all sides, there is agreement that the outlook favors a major victory by the Socialists and Communists as well as a considerable growth in the influence of the People's Front. In spite of the violent campaigns of the Right, in spite of the unquestionable uneasiness among the French masses themselves as a result of the policy of "pause" inaugurated by Léon Blum, and continued—if not made worse—by the decree laws of the Chautemps-Bonnet cabinet, the masses who sent the imposing majority of May 1936 into the Chamber of Deputies have no intention whatever of turning their backs on the People's Front. On the contrary. There is a definite impression that the state of mind of the average French voter "on the Left" can be summarized as follows: inasmuch as the program of the People's Front has not been carried through to completion, inasmuch as difficulties have been caused by the activities of the big bourgeoisie, the employers, and the fascist organizations, the People's Front must be given new forces which will enable it to carry out, despite all maneuvers, the mission for which it was founded.

There can be no talk of "profound disillusionment." The gains are being held, and foremost among these are the collective labor agreements, the vacations with pay, obligatory arbitration, and the machinery of the June social laws. These achievements have at least altered the social physiognomy of France.

On the other hand, it is clear that the Right is entering the election battle of October in a most desperate plight. The differences among the various fascist and reactionary organizations have never before reached such proportions. Each of the fascist chieftains is striving to outdistance his rivals. It is impossible to speak of a "united front" of reaction. Colonel François-Casimir de la Rocque, exposed as having taken a cut out of the "secret funds budget" of the Tardieu and Laval cabinets, is violently attacked by the leaders of the royalist Action Française, Léon Daudet and Charles Maurras, and is knifed by the Führer of the so-called French People's Party, Jacques Doriot. M. Henri de Kerillis, the chief journalistic spokesman of reaction, who during recent years has been one of the organizers of the election campaign of the Right, has declared that his side has never gone into the struggle in worse condition.

Consequently, there is every reason to expect a smashing victory of the candidates of the various parties, the People's Front, Radicals, Socialists, and Communists.

It now appears that the question of infusion of new strength into the policy of the People's Front in the domestic and foreign fields will be raised soon after the election. At this moment there can be no doubt that the most important single political factor will be the policy of the Communist Party. The position taken until now by this party, which for more than a year has been the driving force of the People's Front, is well-known. Contrary to the position of certain Socialist theorists, the Communist Party does not at all consider that it is necessary to proceed to "reforms of structure" which would transform more or less profoundly the economic structure of the country. It in no wise fears these reforms, and there is no reform which is too daring for it. But it forcefully states that before all else there is the common program of the People's Front, that not every section of this program has been carried out in practice, and what matters most before speaking of new stages is to carry through this present program. The Communist Party believes that the factor which would be of most powerful aid in achieving the fulfillment of this political ambition would be the reëstablishment of the political unity of the working class. I do not think it can be doubted that the question of unity is due to emerge as the new factor which this autumn will be capable of bringing about further changes in the political life of France.

John Heliker

At the last meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France (a Central Committee meeting which demonstrated with astounding force the solidity of the Communist Party, its single-minded viewpoint, and its comradeship), Maurice Thorez, the party's general secretary, placed the accent on the Communists' desire for unity. Proposals were made to the Socialists who rejected them after a month of reflection. These proposals accepted the basis for unity laid down by the Socialist congress held at Marseilles about ten days before this session of the Central Committee: inner democracy in the united party, sovereignty of the national congress and of the congress of whatever international the unified party should affiliate with—nothing that the Communists could not accept. In their anxiety to effect unity, the Communists proposed that immediately, at every level within both parties, the members of both the Socialist and Communist organizations should begin to meet and work together. This proposal was categorically rejected by the Socialists. Paul Faure, general secretary of the Socialist Party (S.F.I.O., as it is known in France), in a letter to the Communist Central Committee, reiterated that the Socialists conceived of the preparations for unity only as conversations between the leading bodies of both parties. Jacques Duclos, secretary of the Communist Party, replied that he noted this decision of the Socialist Party with regret, but that he hoped a meeting of the Unification Commission of the two parties would be held in the very near future. It is clear that the slogan of unity launched by the Communists is meeting fervent and profound support among the masses of the workers, and that it will play a major role in the election campaign. It is no less clear that a good number of Socialist leaders are striving and will continue to strive to put a brake on the movement toward unity.

I do not believe there is reason for pessimism. For three years the Communist Party has proved itself the possessor of a persistency and political firmness which give ground for the best of hopes. These hopes, this desire, on the other hand, express far too well the ardent aspirations of the French working people to allow the possibility of disappointment.

It goes without saying that the formation of the united party of the working class would be a factor capable of bringing about a profound metamorphosis in the conditions of political life in France.

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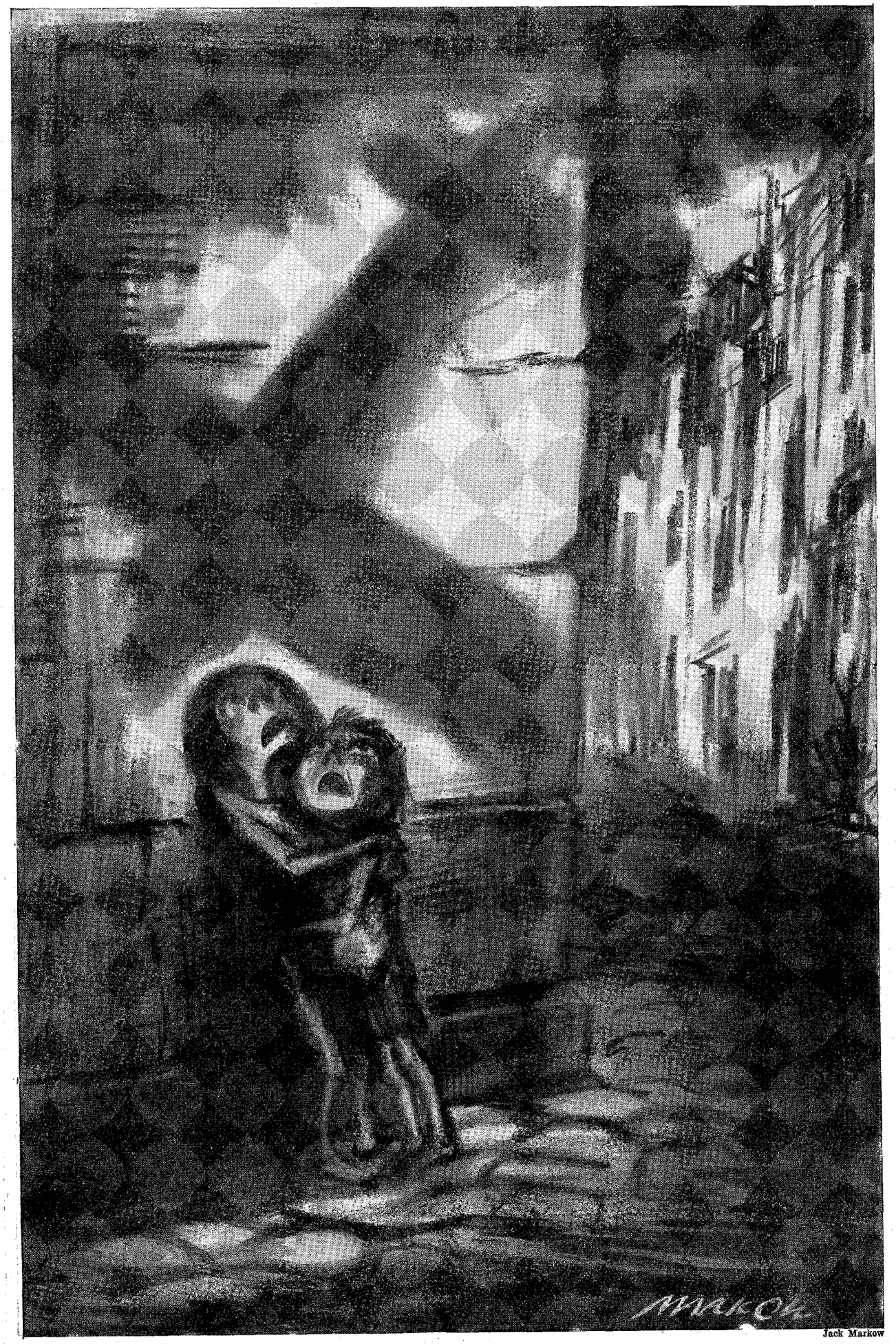

Jack Markow

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ESTABLISHED 1911

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How to Boycott Japan

WE have received numerous inquiries for further information on the effects of a possible embargo and boycott by the United States against Japan. The United States is the most important single exporter to and importer from Japan. Combined with similar action by the British empire, a boycott and embargo would be crushing. Somewhat more than 50 percent of Japan's total imports come from these two powers while somewhat less than the same percentage of Japan's total exports go to these two powers.

Considering the United States alone, a popular boycott would be extremely effective if it were based on only a few products. Japan's most important export commodity to the United States is raw silk. This country took 85 percent of Japan's total export of raw silk in 1936. If Japan cannot sell raw silk, her ability to buy raw cotton, oil, scrap iron, and the like becomes critically impaired. Other important exports to the United States, in the order of their approximate importance, are: china and porcelain ware (tableware, kitchenware, etc.); tea; crab meat (sauce and paste); tuna fish; earthenware, crockery, and stoneware; perilla oil; silk-woven fabrics; pyrethrum or insect powder; and toys.

A boycott of these ten products, especially the first five, would seriously dislocate Japanese economy within perhaps three to six months. The chief American exports to Japan, all of which would come within any official embargo or economic sanctions, are equally crucial to the effective functioning of Japan's war economy. The most important exports are raw cotton, oil, scrap iron, wood pulp, and various finished manufactures. Japan gets practically all of its automobiles, trucks, and buses from the Ford and General Motors companies. Machinery and parts are also mainly supplied by the United States.

It may not be easy to spot Japanese products in some cases, owing either to deliberate falsification by Japanese manufacturers in stamping the place of origin upon their products, or to the fact that the import has been transformed in the process of making the finished product. For the sake of greater simplicity in spreading the boycott against Japanese goods, it is enough to remember the following five, generally easily-identified products: silk (in any form), tea, pottery, toys, and such canned goods as tuna and crab meat.

The Issues at Denver

THE big question as the A. F. of L. convened at Denver was whether the reactionary top leadership would challenge rank-and-file disapproval by insisting on expelling the C.I.O. unions now suspended. Green, Frey, and the rest have moved to make the break final by expulsion, but pressure from below for unity may still convince them that it is safer to maintain the status quo formally, while continuing their destructive splitting tactics of the past year.

The recent convention of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electrical Railway, & Motor Coach Employees at San Francisco typifies the sort of progressive opinion that Green dare not altogether ignore. Besides recommending a change in the laws of the American Federation of Labor, which would end the raiding of industrial unions by reactionary craft union officials, a resolution included this statement:

> However, we believe that the policies of our labor movement, as directed by the A. F. of L., should progress and in order to progress it must change its form of organization from time to time to meet the changed industrial conditions of the world.

It is no accident, either, that leaders of two Federation departments, the building trades and the metal trades, found themselves in hot jurisdictional disputes just prior to the Denver convention. Trouble was brewing among nineteen unions in the building trades where a group of seven unions led by William D. Hutcheson of the Carpenters' Brotherhood opposed twelve smaller unions. The highly skilled crafts fought the election of two department officers from what they regarded as the inferior laborers' group.

Several other highly important issues are sure to come up at Denver. The first is the organizing of the millions of unorganized. It is hard to see how Green can hit upon an effective policy of organizing these unorganized, which does not lead in the direction of C.I.O. Developments at home and abroad have put progressive political action and a realistic stand in regard to peace on labor's "must" list. But at Denver all signs point to a continuation of the Gompers "non-partisan" policy on political action and an ostrich attitude of pure isolationism in regard to the fascist threat of world war.

Every one of the major issues that confront delegates to this A. F. of L. convention goes far beyond the every-day concerns of organized labor. On each of these issues progressive militant forces are ranged against reaction. With the Atlantic City conference of the C.I.O. beginning October 11, workers the country over will be able to make immediate comparisons and decisions as to which kind of leadership and program represents the real interests of American labor.

Progressive Pulse

WE hope the President was exhilarated, as we were, at the progressive sentiment shown all along his pulse-taking northwest passage. How progressive it was can be judged by the fact that it remained the focus of news in a press all too reluctant to report it.

The facts were obvious. Correspondents on the presidential special learned that, so far as immediate public reaction was concerned, the reactionary clan drew a blank in sensationalizing Justice Hugo Black's former membership in the Ku Klux Klan. The reporters also saw for themselves that farmers want more instead of less relief, especially price stabilization. And that not only the people but also their local politicians feel the continuing urgency of federal responsibility toward the unemployed. At the Bonneville Dam a New York *Times* man naïvely noticed that "the President's promise of wide distribution of the power, however disheartening it might have been to the public utility people and their supporters, was deemed certain to win renewed acclaim for the President from the Northwest as a whole."

However, emphasis was not placed on these specific public demands—progressive demands—but on the "hold" the President still has on the people. That, being vague, is easier for a reactionary press to interpret to suit itself. That could be dispensed with under the mystical hocus-pocus of the President's personality, his reckless bounty with public funds.

Thus the interpreters obscured the most significant point: Roosevelt's popularity stands up in the face of a historic press and congressional campaign against him as the personification of elemental rights of labor and of judicial reform. Throughout that campaign the same press bludgeoned Washington politicians with warnings that the President was moving too fast to suit the people "back home." Now we have heard from these people in four key states—territory traditionally progressive, it is true, but predominantly agrarian. We have heard something for the Hershey vigilante-organizers and other would-be drivers of a wedge between workers

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of both town and country to ponder over.

The President's reactions to the progressive pulse are varied. He hints at a special session to pass a farm program and a wages and hours bill—but also at further budget-balancing via relief-paring. Progressive sentiment must increase and sharpen its expression; it must speak, and speak broadly, unitedly, and above all specifically through unions and political organizations, to be remembered in Mr. Roosevelt's "narrow circle"—Washington.

The Eagle Flies Low

AFTER rejecting terms proposed through the New York State Mediation Board, M. Preston Goodfellow, publisher, named his own conditions for settlement of the Brooklyn *Eagle* strike. Goodfellow's offer amounted to little more than a demand for complete capitulation by the three hundred workers who walked out on September 13. Representatives of the Newspaper Guild refused to yield, and the strike will continue.

Increasing public sympathy and support for the walkout are reflected in figures which the Guild quotes from *Media Records*. Comparisons between 1936 and 1937 *Eagle* advertising lineage indicate a loss of ninety-nine columns during the four days from September 20 to 23. This drop means a loss of nearly twelve hundred dollars a day. Such calculations do not take into account increased business this year which has brought gains over 1936 lineage to practically all other newspapers. Figures on circulation losses are not available, but there is no doubt that Tom Girdler's crown is giving Mr. Goodfellow a pain in the neck.

Bayonet Rule in Brazil

BRAZIL'S new "state of war" is an obvious fraud. Cables from that country state that the army command, on the pretext that Communists were planning to lead an uprising on October 27, demanded the reintroduction of the martial law terminated last May. No evidence was produced to back up the charge, but Brazil's parliament nevertheless did the bidding of the corrupt and brutal dictator, Getulio Vargas.

Vargas's real reason for instituting the "state of war" is the poor prospects of his presidential candidate, José Americo de Almeida. Vargas was ineligible to succeed himself in the presidency and decided to put a puppet into office. It was not easy for him to find the right man. The violence and injustice of Vargas's administration has turned the majority of the people against him. For a time, it was thought the present Brazilian ambassador to the United States would consent to run as Vargas's stooge but that plan did not materialize. After long searching, Vargas was forced to fall back on a relatively uninfluential politician.

President Vargas

Opposition arose from within the ruling bureaucracy. Flores da Cunha, governor of Rio Grande do Sul province, advanced his own candidate, Armando de Salles Oliviera, and expert opinion has favored da Cunha's candidate against Vargas's. Vargas has chosen to reintroduce a "state of war" in order to make a mockery of the election, scheduled for January 2, and for no other reason. These last two months of the campaign will now be waged under conditions of terror. Da Cunha's forces are not to be despised, however, and serious trouble may be expected if this conflict within the ruling clique grows worse. As it happens, da Cunha was one of the triumvirate which raised Vargas into power through an insurrection in 1930.

Democracy in Brazil is still largely a matter of form. The absence of political parties puts the actual operation of the constitution on a semi-feudal, rather than a bourgeois, basis. Provincial governors, like da Cunha, still maintain what are to all purposes private armies, and Vargas himself is no stronger than the mercenaries he can hire and pay through the national treasury. The hopeful element in the situation lies in the fact that the dictator has been driven to this desperate measure by the wide and growing discontent among the masses. The uprising of the anti-Vargas National Liberation Alliance under Luis Carlos Prestes in December 1935 was quelled, but the liberation spirit has since taken hold of the people more firmly than ever before.

Exit Caballero

THE elimination of Largo Caballero from the leadership of Spain's largest trade union federation—the General Workers' Union, or U.G.T.—is the last act in a drama which started last spring when Negrin supplanted Largo Caballero at the head of the government. Instead of loyally coöperating with the new premier, Largo Caballero sabotaged at every point, even to the extent of splitting the U.G.T. by expelling thirteen national unions, including those in the Asturias. The ostensible reason was their non-payment of dues, but the real reason was their support of the People's Front policy.

The U.G.T. now has a new executive committee which will work in harmony with the government and the working-class parties. The scandalous charge that the present government is "counter-revolutionary" will no longer be associated with the secretary of the great federation, for an Asturian miner has succeeded Largo Caballero in that post. Incidentally, the NEW MASSES will publish an article in its next issue by Joseph P. Lash on this very question. Mr. Lash is executive secretary of the American Student Union and has just returned from a four-month stay in Spain.

U. S. Clergy Answer

THE open letter on the Spanish hierarchy, issued early this week by one hundred and fifty American religious leaders and educators, possesses precisely those virtues which the document under its criticism, the pastoral letter of the Spanish higher clergy, so signally lacked. The open letter is scrupulously fair to the facts of history. It is logical and not intemperate. It makes no wild, unprovable charges. The names of its signers testify that it was not intended as an attack upon religion, but rather as a counter-statement against the reactionary hierarchy which would harness the Spanish church to the chariot of the fascist Cæsars of today. Men of the caliber of Dr. Ralph Harlow, Dr. Walter Russell Bowie, Dr. Guy Emery Shipler, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Dr. Daniel A. Poling, and Dr. Harry F. Ward have collaborated to perform a real service to democracy as well as to the best ideals of a religion which has been honored only too frequently in the breach rather than in the observance.

The open letter makes four charges and proves each of them to the hilt. "We are amazed," it declares, "to find the pastoral letter (*1*) approving of resort to violence and military insurrection as a means of settling political controversies; (*2*) rejecting not merely the present Popular Front government of Spain but the republic itself and the constitution of 1931 on which it was founded; (*3*) stigmatizing any form of parliamentary government, presumably even if under a constitutional monarchy, as "irresponsible autocracy," and (*4*) condemning in principle

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the democratic institutions, the freedom of worship, and the separation of church and state established by the Constitution of 1931."

It is to be regretted that not a single important Catholic leader signed the open letter. It is equally unfortunate that no outstanding Catholic has publicly repudiated the pastoral letter, the burden of which was clearly political rather than religious. In this respect, American Catholic leaders have acted with less courage and clear-sightedness than their co-religionists in France and England. The pastoral letter was dismissed by the majority of authoritative Catholic publications abroad as the private opinion of a small group of embittered clerics who could not reconcile themselves to the passing of feudalism in Spain. No important Catholic voice in America was raised against the massacre of fifteen hundred innocent people in Badajoz early in the war. But the well-known French Catholic writer, Jacques Maritain, spoke out more boldly. "It is sacrilege," he said, "to shoot, as at Badajoz, hundreds of men, to celebrate the Feast of Assumption." We have said, and we repeat, that this blindness on the part of the American Catholic leaders only further estranges them from their own parishioners. The Catholics of America cannot afford to take their cue from that small group of reactionaries whose names were attached to the pastoral letter.

No Peace in Palestine

THERE is no peace in Palestine because partitionment can be forced upon the Arabs only at the point of a gun. The action of the British in forcibly exiling four Arabian leaders has now been met by another general Arab strike. Nobody can tell how soon a new bloody conflict will break out. From the first, the various Arab factions have been united against the British plan of trisecting Palestine. This unity testifies to the unanimous sentiment among the Arabian people, for a few of the Arab leaders have, on past occasions, not opposed the British on major questions. That all should be forced to do so now is eloquent proof that their people would stand for nothing else.

From present appearances the introduction of partitionment is to be preceded by a reign of terror intended to cow the Arabian people into submission. The British have already obtained permission, in principle, from the League of Nations to go ahead with their plan. Whatever Zionist disagreement formerly existed in respect to the division has now been submerged. Only the Arabs—the majority of the people actually affected—will not grovel before the crafty imperialists who are pursuing their age-old policy: if the opposition cannot be bribed, then it must be broken.

The tragedy of the situation lies with the Jews. The Jewish people, themselves long-suffering before blind oppression and savage tyranny, are again likely to act as buffer between the Arabian national movement and its British antagonist. The last Zionist Congress, which passed a decision tantamount to acceptance of the British plan, would seem to have made this inevitable. Peace in Palestine cannot be procured on any such basis. The Jewish and Arabian peoples have much in common, but this community of interest can be realized only in joint struggle against British rule. A grave responsibility again rests with the Zionist leaders.

Too Much Cotton?

WHEN the U. S. Department of Agriculture recently estimated a bumper cotton crop exceeding sixteen million bales, Wall Street shivered, Washington viewed it with alarm, and a couple of million southern farmers, tenants, and sharecroppers saw ruin ahead. Of course, there is nothing new in this panicky reaction to nature's bounty, but the capitalist contradiction seemed particularly glaring because it coincided with crop statements from the Soviet Union, where a record-breaking grain harvest has brought nothing but happiness and increased confidence to Russia' vast population.

The price and cost figures on cotton are illuminating. Cotton at the ginning mill now fetches about eight cents a pound if it is good 7/8" staple white middling. A farmer with thirty acres in cotton can expect to harvest about seven thousand pounds of staple—if his crop is heavy and makes nearly half a bale to the acre. After he pays one cent a pound for picking and another cent to have it ginned, he will realize roughly four hundred twenty dollars. Some additional help is needed to plant and chop a thirty-acre field. Fifty dollars is a fair figure for this extra expense, which just about cancels his return from the sale of cotton seed. In other words, his bumper yield has netted the grower some four hun-

Snow

Casey at the Bat

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dred and twenty-five dollars—living expenses and taxes still to be reckoned with.

Suppose, however, that disaster had cut the southern cotton crop almost in half. The same farmer would have had perhaps three thousand eight hundred pounds of staple for sale. But, in view of the decline in surplus (carrying-over) up to this year, the price of 7/8" middling would have been about twenty-eight cents per pound, making the crop worth one thousand sixty-four dollars. Picking and ginning at a cent a pound plus fifty dollars for extra labor would leave a net return of about nine hundred and forty dollars—more than double the amount the grower now receives for raising twice as much cotton. Twenty-eight cents is an arbitrary figure, but cotton has several times exceeded this price following shorp crops.

Needless to say, the inevitable price of farm prosperity, whether for cotton, cattle, or wheat growers, is a reduced standard of living for average workers the country over.

Let's look at the world supply—not in terms of profit, but of human needs. President Roosevelt says that one third of our population is poorly clothed, yet this country consumed 7,900,000 bales of cotton last year. If even our low standard were applied to the rest of the world, total needs would reach 134,000,000 bales—against a present production of 36,000,000. Of course, only a coöperative world could produce and distribute in such lavish fashion. Our own 1937 crop looms like a Frankenstein monster—picture the horror of international capitalism if any one should suggest that the world is still short one hundred million bales.

Vermont Is Offended

VERMONT is busily debating the question: "Does the W.P.A. state guide book malign the Green Mountain State or is it just the tonic we need?" This seems like an innocuous question, but you never can tell when or where politics filters into the scene. The reactionaries of Vermont would like to prove that this smartly written Federal Writers' Project volume is not only anti-chamber-of-commerce, but downright "communistic." Taking a cue from their Massachusetts brethren who denounced their guide because it stated in the very mildest way the plain facts about the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the Vermonters who placed the state in the Landon column last November are offended because the Vermont guide also states facts.

Vermont, the book says, once was the source from which the rebellious Green Mountain boys sprang into action. Vermont, when young, fought in the forefront of rebellion against the British taskmasters. Vermont turned the corner in the 1850's and now it is a sedate state for oldsters. Young Vermonters wander off to wicked cities, while in the "village idiocy" of the type mentioned by Marx, the average Vermonter of today is a meek, middle-aged chap who lives in the past.

All this is downright revolutionary to those who would like to destroy the Federal Writers' Project. But the federal writers take solace in a press which is excellent and go on creating an American guide series.

Debunking the Supreme Court

WHAT is the score, now that the Black controversy is over? What have the tories accomplished by their terrific campaign of the past month? How have the people responded? And who wins and who loses?

One thing the tories have accomplished. They have nobly advanced the work of debunking the Supreme Court. By centering around the Court a campaign of personalities almost unprecedented in vindictiveness and hypocritical righteousness, they have torn the sacred veil from the bench. They have reminded people that Supreme Court justices are not disembodied repositories of ultimate wisdom, but human beings with economic associations and political backgrounds, with prejudices and failings. The tories have done a good job here, and they will bitterly repent it. They plan to keep Black under a microscope, to link up his future decisions with his former Klan connection. They will find that they have taught the people to do the same with the other justices, and that the corporation-lawyer background of a McReynolds, a Stone, and a Sutherland can also become fighting issues. The day is past when, however bitterly the people might feel about the Supreme Court's autocratic intervention in favor of big business, they were inhibited from questioning the motives of the nine ineffable ones. It's open season for Supreme Court justices from now on, and labor has plenty of ammunition.

The people simply have not responded to the campaign against Black. In launching their attack and continuing it with unabated hope, the Liberty Leaguers, Blocks, and Hearsts, and their bell-wether, the New York *Times,* ignored an outstanding lesson of the 1936 campaign, namely, that while the people buy the capitalist press by the millions of copies, they cherish a profound mistrust of it. Very early in the campaign against Black it became apparent that this "exposé" had underlying motives which went far beyond the question of whether Black had been a member of the Klan; and that these motives were deeply reactionary. Every editorial writer in the whole of Republican and reactionary Democratic press might thunder for Black's resignation—with such snide "friends of the people" as Mr. Stern of the New York *Post* swelling the chorus—but the man on the street somehow preferred to remember more recent news about Black than his joining the Klan fifteen years ago. He remembered what Black very correctly emphasized in his radio speech, a record of liberalism in the Senate.

The casuists of the New York *Times* may argue to their own satisfaction that the source of the attack is of no moment, that the *argumentum ad hominem* is fallacious, but the man on the street remembers a broad principle of conduct peculiarly applicable to this case: that plaintiffs must come into court with clean hands. And when the people saw the Hearst-led gang of reactionaries trying to tear Black off the Supreme Court bench, they looked first and last at the condition of the hands that were clawing at Black, and found them exceedingly dirty. Consequently the reaction of the people to the whole campaign, starting with complete unwillingness to accept the reactionaries' word for it, has progressed to a general conviction that Black was being persecuted, and that the whole thing was a tiresome nuisance.

Who wins? We think that on the whole the people win. The tories have not succeeded in getting Black off the Supreme Court bench. The result is that there is on the bench today a man who, talking directly to thirty million listeners, has based his appeal for confidence on a record of liberalism.

Who loses? The Liberty League, Hearst, Block, and the anti-labor, anti-progressive forces of the country lose. They have taken a direct appeal to the people on circumstantial evidence which seemed very impressive and which they heightened with every device that their enormous resources permitted. But they simply failed to get the people to listen.

A word about Black's radio speech. It was satisfactory in what he said, but there were serious omissions. Black was in a position to have swept the country with him by admitting that he was wrong in joining the Klan, by a forthright denunciation of the Klan by name. He could then have pointed to his record since leaving the Klan, as he did, to prove that this change of attitude was no recent thing. This he failed to do, and so threw away an opportunity to turn the attack on him into a complete moral rout of the reactionaries. His vigorous defense of religious and racial freedom stood out in his speech. He may be sure that the progressive labor forces of the country will be no less alert than the reactionaries in seeing that he keeps his word.

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"Good News" in American Literature

Granville Hicks's recent review of "New Letters" provokes a discussion which explores some fundamental questions in the aesthetics of writing

A Symposium

TWO weeks ago Granville Hicks reviewed at length in our columns *New Letters in America,* an anthology of the work of thirty-six younger writers edited by Horace Gregory, poetry editor of the NEW MASSES. In the course of his review, Hicks made some very forthright statements about radicalism and pessimism (among other things), statements which found Gregory and some of the *New Letters* authors in hearty disagreement. The NEW MASSES prints these several expressions of opinion, along with Hicks's review, both for their merits as bearing on the particular literary questions at issue and in the hope that the discussion will lead to clearer definitions of literary and artistic canons.—THE EDITORS.

By Horace Gregory

BECAUSE I BELIEVE that a headstrong, slashing attack on young writers is sometimes tonic for their work, I read Granville Hicks's review of *New Letters in America* with considerable interest. And for me, as editor of *New Letters,* he opened wide a central issue in my divergence from his point of view. That issue should be fought out here, in the pages of the NEW MASSES and nowhere else, for I believe that today young writers of anti-fascist conviction should read and use the NEW MASSES to discuss their work in creating a growing literature, a literature that embraces among many others the work of Thomas Mann as well as Martin Anderson Nexö, that includes such poets as W. H. Auden, Muriel Rukeyser, and Robert Fitzgerald, as well as such widely divergent novelists as William Rollins, Grace Lumpkin, and André Malraux. It includes myself and Granville Hicks, and has included both of us consistently for many years.

One reason for my interest in Mr. Hicks's review was because, as I read it, it seemed to be another example of the same technique that D. H. Lawrence used in his exciting peacock-tail essay attacking Edwin Muir. Lawrence, you remember, talked about the beauty of the peacock's tail, and about his love of splendor, which no one could deny, nor wish to deny, nor would ever deny in a thousand years. He did not answer Edwin Muir's questions, no more than Mr. Hicks reviewed *New Letters,* but he talked bravely, courageously, and truly about his own vitality, which I believe in as firmly as I believe that "Communism is good news," whether we heard it back in 1924, as I did, or whether it is heard today by a growing number of younger writers.

Lest Mr. Hicks and the readers of the NEW MASSES misunderstand me, I want to say at once that I do *not* believe that Mr. Hicks has written, or intended to write, a political review: there is about as much allegiance to an imaginary "party line" in his review as could be found in the entire works of D. H. Lawrence. But what I do find in Mr. Hicks's review is a curiously sectarian loyalty to the kind of writing that once was the delight of H. L. Mencken and his followers, and with it the same stark, staring blindness to what is valuable and useful in poetry. What I mean by this is that he prefers the hope of converting a Sinclair Lewis to our beliefs to reading carefully such younger writers as I have published; in writing of them, he gave them exactly four paragraphs in a seventeen-paragraph review.

I refer, of course, to Mr. Hicks's inordinate praise of Sinclair Lewis in the NEW MASSES when *It Can't Happen Here* appeared. His position then was not greatly different from that of those who, for a living, are forced to write hastily, thoughtlessly, and with the hope of being readable in newspaper columns and Sunday book sections. Was it good news that Mr. Hicks was praising a writer whose recent work, I insist, is "shoddy and superficial"? Is it good news that Mr. Lewis is now reported to be writing an anti-Communist play? Is it good news for young writers, many of whom were completely ignored by Mr. Hicks and then told the good news that neither they nor I would deny? Is it good news when Mr. Hicks crashes down on David Wolff, a young poet whose unpublished manuscript is one of the best books of verse I have read this year, and who must find time to write in the short hours left him after working on a job?

I am not being sentimental here, but employing what I believe to be a cleaner, more humane form of realism than the kind that Sinclair Lewis writes. I know that the sources of David Wolff's work lie in the same good news of which Mr. Hicks writes and then waves before us quite as D. H. Lawrence waved the peacock's tail. I also know that David Wolff is a better poet than many who receive inordinate praise from tired men and women whose work is often hasty and at times ill-paid. Mr. Wolff should expect a more thoughtful review from Mr. Hicks, and so should Muriel Rukeyser and Miss Zaturenska, who are grouped together on the fantastic charge of harshness. This charge is as crazy as Franz Kaffka's picture of bourgeois justice in *The Trial.*

And if I say this, am I bickering, quibbling, or denying Mr. Hicks's good news? I have confidence that I am not, for I admire Mr. Hicks's central convictions, which are not actually the core of his review, but are the peacock's tail. The actual center of Mr. Hicks's review is a defense of a kind of realism that was ably practiced during the 1920's; and again, I do not deny the masters of that technique, but insist that Mr. Hicks seems to use it as his only scale of measurement. And there are many times when I suspect that he is trying to flog dead horses back to life. In the case of Sinclair Lewis, the dead horse got up and ran away, ran, in fact, straight in the direction of Leon Trotsky's friends, those who detract from all the good work done in recent American literature, who attempt to break up union activity as well as bewilder fledgling intellectuals, and who consistently quibble, bicker, nag, and deny.

In the *Herald Tribune Books* of September 20, 1936, one may read what Mr. Lewis has to say of Isidor Schneider and Robert Forsythe.

Mr. Hicks, with his strong bias in favor of a so-called "realistic" literature, made an honest, but grave mistake in *The Great Tradition* when he hoped for a poet who would be a combination of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, a creature which, I fear, he will not find in his lifetime or in the next five thousand years. Does this detract from his admirable work in the rest of the book? Only so far as poetry is concerned. Does it disqualify Mr. Hicks as the authoritative biographer of John Reed (an important American biography that some day should be reprinted in the Modern Age reprints)? Not at all. But it does get in the way of his reading and understanding of contemporary poetry. As he glances through *New Letters,* he finds himself reading gloom and lack of musical quality in all poems but one. That poem, of course, is a good poem, because if it wasn't, I wouldn't have published it. But only one poem out of twenty-eight! Isn't Mr. Hicks, with his rusty slide-rule of realistic fiction, doing the real quibbling, bickering, and denying? And has the slide-rule anything to do with politics or "party lines," or good news or bad? It has not, and will never have, as long as he and I believe that the U.S.S.R. is building an enduring civilization, and that Trotskyism is a disease, and that good writers today are united to fight fascism.

In his attitude toward poetry, it would seem that Mr. Hicks (quite unintentionally, of course) forms a united front with Edmund ("Poetry-is-dead" Wilson and Robinson Jeffers who finds "our verse troubled or frowning" and who then delivers an attack on strikes and the new Russia. I can scarcely believe that Mr. Hicks read Richard Eberhart's "Poem" in *New Letters,* particularly the concluding stanza:

> Who talks with the Absolute salutes a shadow
> Who seeks himself shall lose himself;
> And the golden pheasants are no help
> And action must be learned from love of man.

This assertion is neither mechanical nor forced; nor is the verse harsh or unclear; nor do I believe for one moment that Muriel Rukeyser's poem, "The Cruise," is uncharacteristic of her quickening style, which readers of the NEW MASSES had an opportunity to discover for themselves in "Mediterranean." Would Mr. Hicks prefer *Conversation at Midnight* which is comparable to the quality of Sinclair Lewis's recent prose? Would he rather try to "win over" Miss Millay than to encourage a number of younger (and, I believe, cleaner and better) writers? If so, then I leave him (as far as poetry is concerned) in the company of Edmund Wilson and Robinson Jeffers; for my good news, along with Mr. Hicks's good news, is that poetry is reviving under the stimulus of more than one literary tradition, and if Mr. Hicks doesn't believe me, I strongly recommend that he re-read Stephen Spender's "The Destructive Element" and C. Day Lewis's "A Hope for Poetry."

The good news means more than the survival of a single group of novelists; it has meant far more than that for the past seven years. I thought it was

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good news when S. Funaroff's *We Gather Strength* appeared in 1933, and said so at once, in the pages of the *Herald Tribune*. I thought it was good news when *Trial Balances* appeared in 1935, in which I introduced T. C. Wilson and Malcolm Cowley introduced Alfred Hayes. That good news began to undermine the feeling of despair held by a number of critics in 1930, who had read Hart Crane and couldn't understand a line of anything he wrote. And today, I believe that it is very good news that the following poets have appeared in the "Social Poets" number of *Poetry* (May 1936): Edwin Rolfe, Alfred Hayes, Kenneth Fearing, David Schreiber, David Wolff, T. C. Wilson, John Wheelwright, R. P. Blackmur, Hildegarde Flanner, Josephine Miles, S. Funaroff, Muriel Rukeyser, and in the *Forum* for February 1937, additional names included: Archibald Fleming, Eunice Clark, David Schubert, William Stephens, James Agee, Clark Mills, Elizabeth Bishop, Winfield Scott, and Robert Fitzgerald; and in *New Letters,* eight of the above and Etta Blum, Tony Palmer, Naomi Raplan, Arthur Ebel Steig, Lionel Abel, Richard Eberhart, Emma Swan, John Malcolm Brinnin, Kerker Quinn, Louis Grudin, Frederic Prokosch, and Marya Zaturenska.

And today I find my own work in *Chorus for Survival* (after it had been condemned as "gloomy" and God knows what else by a NEW MASSES reviewer in 1935) described as "cheerful" in a college textbook. I know that the reviewer who attacked me then didn't follow a party line or was malicious or dishonest. All I know is that he couldn't read poetry, and should have been told to read it with interest and care. The reviewer should not have been bickered at and nagged; nor should Mr. Hicks be badgered for his refusal to read poetry if he doesn't like it. But I agree with Mr. Hicks about good news; I think the time is coming when he will change his mind, and change it with the same forthright courage that he has shown in modifying his specific opinions of John Dos Passos and of Sinclair Lewis. I think the time is coming when he will find the verse of David Wolff no less depressing than Grace Lumpkin's enduring (but not altogether cheerful) *To Make My Bread.* I am inclined to agree with Mr. Hicks in his appreciation of John Hampson's work in his review, but I wish he had helped me when I reviewed Mr. Hampson's memorable first novel in the *Nation* in 1931 and when again I praised his book in the *New Republic* in 1933. It was a pity to see *Saturday Night at the Greyhound* go out of print for lack of adequate critical support. Again, I think it would be good news to see that book in the Modern Age reprint series.

Meanwhile *New Letters in America* will be published twice a year. This should be good news for younger writers. Walt Whitman once wrote: "The poetic area is very spacious—has room for all—has so many mansions." He too had confidence as I have today that poetry is a living art; and it was he who also said: "To have great poets, there must be great audiences too." These statements may sound platitudinous to Mr. Hicks, but I believe that now and in the face of his review, they should be said again. I believe that those who "quibble, bicker, nag, and deny" will be doomed to a hell of their own making, but I am certain that very few of the thirty-five young poets I have published in *Poetry,* the *Forum,* and *New Letters* are of the sort that Mr. Hicks describes. It is a pity, I think, that they should be tarred with the same brush that he intends for his critical enemies.

Though I may disagree deeply with Mr. Hicks concerning the present vitality of realism (as I think it should *not* be applied to criticism of poetry), I have confidence again that he and I shall stand together against the dangers of a split among the violent sectarians; and that we shall stand together as we have for the past seven years in praise of anti-fascist literature.

As I said at the beginning of this letter, Mr. Hicks's review might well be tonic to young writers, but its essentially negative spirit should not be encouraged in the future.

By Muriel Rukeyser

GRANVILLE HICKS, in his review of *New Letters in America,* speaks of his "tolerating" the conversion story in his search for hope in literature. It seems to me that the time for such tolerance gives way now; that application of a rigid standard of the (moral) happy ending is useless and has been proved so every time it has been applied to left-wing literature. A great many people feel now that whatever excellence the left-wing writers have depends more on their sensitive straight facing of present scenes and values than on the happy posturing of their theses. Whatever is inert is hopeless, now as always; whatever is living and aware contains its base of hope. And that's no discovery or denial.

Mr. Hicks has recommended, curiously, that critics practice what they preach. This has been turned against critics before, but always by the enemies of criticism, and comes as a disappointment from Mr. Hicks who is a critic and friend of letters.

He harks back to the first *Caravan,* calls for "a greater eagerness for experience," says "it is much harder to express the Communist conviction of triumph of the working class than it is to communicate a mood of disgust and despair," complains bitterly that the poems in this book are hard for him to read aloud with pleasure.

But the book *New Letters* has sources of joy, for it has good writing in it. "Behold a Cloud in the West" has a true picture of the case for peace; "The Man in the Jail Is Not Jesus" contains a vision; the introduction calls for entertainment as well as use in the contents. In the poems, read for hope Schubert's

> Imagine, imagine, America, from the poet Alberti
> The veritable roots of a Christmas tree:
> Gladness and singing and the warm south
> In your mouth. . . .

or David Wolff's

> . . . It is of you, broad land,
> I sing, I sing of you, how near
> your mountains, after beautiful toil
> I stood under drooping pears in fine starlight. . . .
> . . . So turn, begin
> speech with the darkening nations; and with all who
> stamp against evil, hating death; with
> strikers especially; and with the tall plowmen of pioneer hills.

The hope in this book is not the familiar one, for the next strike to be better than this last; or the survivor of calamity to be not so much alone, now that he has found his group; but another, profounder one, by which writers can touch their time and their country and find not the sweetness and light here called for, but its life and a steadier, less blatant hope than Mr. Hicks demands—a hope to be worked for continually, not shouted before its time.

By Marshall Schacht

BUT WHEN WAS LYRIC POETRY ever more than a lagging barometer of social thought, a subconscious, heightened picture of an individual's reactions to individual experience, colored by chance influences and the fashion of the time? Most of it has no concern with social consciousness, and doesn't need to have—like the poems of Donne, or Emily Dickinson, or Robert Frost. Poetry isn't supposed to do what the mind thinks it should. The mind may go Communist, but the poet can't learn so fast. Communism is a rational philosophy, like utilitarianism, as well as a religion and an experience of love. The rational part isn't the business of poetry at all, and as for the rest, worshipful lyrics and lyrics of love for an idea can be very bad indeed. What can a poet do but be what he is, and let the color of his rational life fall through to stain, when it can do so poetically, the much overrated importance of his song?

The Sowers — Herb Kruckman

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Lithograph by Harry Sternberg

Isn't the only positive song, outside æsthetics, the labor chant?

The rest is up to thinking and doing—not verse, or even æsthetic prose.

By Granville Hicks

MR. GREGORY'S story of the peacock's tail fits my review of *New Letters*. I did use the review as an opportunity to make a certain number of general statements about left-wing literature. I can understand why Mr. Gregory, who is statistically correct in saying that I devoted only four out of seventeen paragraphs to the writers in his book, is a little distressed, but I don't think he ought to have jumped to the conclusion that I hadn't read the writers carefully. I am willing to be charged with bad proportions or bad judgment, but not with having written about something else because I hadn't read the book.

With the bulk of what I say in the thirteen paragraphs that aren't about the writers in *New Letters* Mr. Gregory is apparently in agreement. That is, he agrees that Communism is good news and that left-wing writers ought to be able to communicate the hope that they feel. I never really doubted this, but I am delighted to have him say it. What he doesn't make clear is how he feels about the success or failure of our writers in expressing, in giving imaginative substance to, that hope. He is full of hope because many new poets are being published, which seems to me very fine, but isn't what I was talking about. I was saying that Communism is good news, and that most of our writers don't make me feel that they know and believe that in the very depths of their imaginations. I still would like to know whether Mr. Gregory agrees or disagrees, and if he disagrees, I should like to see the evidence.

Miss Rukeyser does disagree and says so clearly and cites two short stories and two poems to show that *New Letters* does not give a general impression of despair. The two stories seem to me to express nothing whatsoever, let alone the kind of hope I am talking about. One of the poems she mentions I also mentioned, but I said that the affirmation was less convincing than the setting forth of reasons for despair. I could have said the same thing about the other.

Mr. Gregory, Miss Rukeyser, and Mr. Schacht all attach a somewhat disconcerting amount of importance to the paragraph I wrote on poetry. I asked, in all sincerity, a simple question. Why, I inquired, is there so little in contemporary poet that can be called melody? I did not say there oug to be melody. I did not say that poetry witho melody was valueless. I did not even say that disliked poetry without melody. I merely said th much modern poetry seemed to beat rather harshl on the ear, and I wondered why. I thought M Gregory might give me an answer. Instead, h says the charge is crazy. Well, maybe, but I pu this innocent question to a whole roomful of critic one night, and they offered lots of ingenious ex planations, without one of them denying the assump tion I was making. The assumption may be wrong of course, but I can't account for the heat it raise in Mr. Gregory and Miss Rukeyser.

I feel the same way about Mr. Gregory's comments on realism. It is true that Mr. Gregory thinks realism is played out, whereas I don't. It is true that he would like to see realism supplanted by something else, whereas the most I can say is that I should be glad to have it supplemented by anything else that works. It is true that he has suddenly become devoted to the fable, which I regard as just another blind alley. But I don't believe that a defense of realism is the core of my review. Instead, it seems secondary to the theme to which I devoted those thirteen paragraphs.

It is probably a fact that I admire Sinclair Lewis more than Gregory does, but he might have reread my review of *It Can't Happen Here* before speaking of "inordinate praise." I began by saying, "*It Can't Happen Here* is not a great novel. It is a political tract, a novel with a message, and it can no more be judged by ordinary standards than could *Looking Backward* or the *Iron Heel*." I said, "The various characters just barely serve their function in the tract and that is all." I said that I was writing "a political review of a political book." It might be, I ventured to say, that Lewis was looking at America with new eyes. If so, "he ought to give us the kind of book that *Babbitt* promised a book alive with understanding, warm with sympathy, a full, rich, honest, courageous book. If *Can't Happen Here* is an event in American politics that would be an event in American literature. This is praise, but not exactly inordinate.

Miss Rukeyser thinks the "conversion" theme should be simply ruled out. I don't, because I know there is a great story there that hasn't yet been written. And the same is true of the strike theme. As for asking critics to practice what they preach, I think that, if Miss Rukeyser will look again at the context of the remark, she will feel less cause for disappointment.

I am very sorry that Mr. Gregory feels that I was including his thirty-five poets among those who "quibble, bicker, nag, and deny." That sentence and the whole last paragraph referred back to the currents of criticism I was discussing in the beginning of the review. It was not meant to apply to the contributors to *New Letters*, and is applicable only to a few of them.

Mr. Schacht's remarks I, feeling rather chastened by the onslaught that my simple query has brought upon me from the poets, would like to leave to them. In case anybody is interested, I don't agree, but I should like to hear what Mr. Gregory and Miss Rukeyser have to say.

I should like to hear what they—and others, of course—have to say on all the points raised by my review. There is a great deal in Mr. Gregory's letter with which I agree, but nothing with which I agree more heartily than his statement that the critical issues of the day should be fought out in the pages of the NEW MASSES. We can argue, as this correspondence proves, amiably and perhaps not unfruitfully. Let us by all means continue.

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War over Frisco

In alliance with the employers, the A. F. of L. is waging open warfare on the C.I.O., centering the attack on the longshoremen

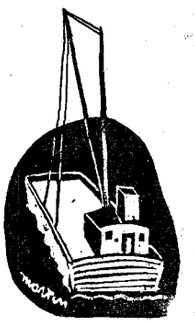
By Robert Holmes

E FOLLOWING ARTICLE describes the relationship forces of employers, A. F. of L., and C.I.O. as .y affect the drive for unification of the Pacific ast labor movement on the basis of a progressive ogram. A focal point in that struggle has been e anti-C.I.O. activity of the A. F. of L. Teamrs' Union, which declared an embargo on the ndling of freight unloaded by C. I. O. longshore-. The soundness of the analysis and predicis given by Robert Holmes is attested to by the ct that the day after his article was received, the eamsters' Union, under pressure of the C.I.O. unter-attack and the rebelliousness of its own nk and file, called off its embargo directed against ie C.I.O. longshoremen's union. This is a decisive ictory for the C.I.O., and indicates that the near ıture will find progressive trade unionism, under e leadership of the C.I.O., supreme on the West oast—THE EDITORS.

THE docks of San Francisco, which in the past three years have seen historic labor victories, are today the central arena of e bitter internecine C.I.O.-A. F. of L. struge on the West Coast. Let it be understood at e outset that this fight is not between the nk and file of the unions involved, the Interational Longshoremen & Warehousemen's nion (the I.L.W.U., formerly the I.L.A., now affiliated with the C.I.O.) and the otherhood of Teamsters. Rather, this dise is an effort on the part of reactionary amster officials, aligned with labor-busting nployers, to obtain jurisdiction over inland arehousemen and halt the forward march of he C.I.O. in the Pacific area. From both eamster officials and employer spokesmen has ome this damning admission. Said Dave Beck, trong-arm teamster "czar" of Seattle, who is irecting the attempted raid: "Before we are through, we are going to call on the American Legion, fraternal organizations, business interests, and the general public to join our efforts to stop irresponsible and communistic action." And from the mouth of J. F. Vizzard, secretary of the Draymen's Association: "The teamsters are fighting our fight as well as their own."

The "incident" out of which the coast-wide battle arose occurred on September 2 at the Hyde Street warehouse of the labor-hating California Packing Corp. This warehouse had been closed for two months after locking out some seventy members of the I.L.W.U. On the day in question some members of the teamsters' union were dispatched to the warehouse to remove the "hot cargo" stored there. Warehousemen immediately threw up picket lines. The teamsters' officials who had thus tried to get teamster members to scab on another union took the occasion to declare a coast-wide war on the I.L.W.U., demanded that the eleven thousand members of the union who were warehousemen be forthwith turned over to the teamsters' union and ordered an embargo on the port of San Francisco until the warehousemen would capitulate, which was to be effected by not permitting teamsters to move cargo to or from the front. "This is a fight to the finish," screamed John McLaughlin, San Francisco generalissimo of the teamsters.

"The fight to a finish," demanded by Beck, McLaughlin, & Co., means that they want the eleven thousand warehousemen organized by the I.L.W.U. in the past three years turned over to them in a body so they can reap the per capita tax and other benefits. For years the exploited warehousemen had pleaded for organization. Teamster officials turned deaf ears. Following the great strike of 1934, the prestige of the victorious longshoremen was enormous. From all over the city they received calls for aid from workers both organized and unorganized. Among the latter were inland warehousemen. The longshoremen proceeded to organize these workers into their union, won contracts for them in the 1936-37 strike, improved their conditions, and raised their pay to decent standards. Then came the demand from teamster officials that these workers, now organized by and into the longshoremen's union, be turned over to the jurisdiction of the teamsters. Longshoremen refused to turn them over; warehousemen refused to leave the longshoremen. Teamster officials carried their demand to the mausoleum of the fifteen old men of the A. F. of L. at Washington and obtained a fiat last April from that autocratic and archaic board that jurisdiction over inland warehousemen was awarded to teamsters. Armed with this star-chamber ruling, the teamsters renewed their demand for control of the warehousemen and met with further refusals from the warehousemen to surrender themselves to the teamsters.



Martin

Dave Beck, who rules Seattle with armed thugs and "goon" squads, obtained the expulsion of the warehousemen from the Portland and Seattle central labor councils for their refusal to bend to his demands. In San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well as in smaller ports, the storm brewed. Finally, three weeks ago, it broke. A. F. of L. officials carried the fight into the San Francisco central labor council, one of the most powerful labor councils in the nation, where progressive officials and delegates to the council had done yeoman work to maintain a united labor movement. The longshoremen and warehousemen were expelled from the council on instructions from William Green, ostensibly for the action of these organizations in voting to affiliate with the C.I.O. (the vote of the twenty thousand membership was about ten to one for C.I.O. affiliation). The real reason for their expulsion, however, was the refusal of the warehousemen to turn themselves over to the teamsters.

Harry Bridges took the floor at the council meeting and ripped the mask from the ouster order.

> This is not a question of the C.I.O. or A. F. of L. That is a national issue which will be determined nationally, and while I'm on the subject I want to say that the C.I.O. is here to stay no matter what happens here tonight or elsewhere in the country. The C.I.O. is labor's answer to the A. F. of L.'s failure for more than twenty-five years to organize workers in the mass-production industries. But on the subject of this ouster order, it's simply a question of whether we're to turn over eleven thousand of our members to the teamsters and stay in the council, or protect our membership and get out of the council. Well, we choose to protect our membership. We organized these workers after the teamsters had refused to organize them. They have voted to affiliate with the C.I.O. and no fiat from Bill Green and the fifteen old men at Washington is going to make us split our ranks. We're going out of the council, I'm convinced of that, but before we go, we want to assure all unions that we will support them 100 percent in any trouble they may have with their employers, whether they're A. F. of L. unions or C.I.O. unions. We are grateful to the rank and file for their support of us. We know that our action will meet the approval of the mass of the workers of San Francisco.

Bridges was cheered to the echo, not only by sympathizers, but by delegates from unions who were forced to vote for the ouster, though they did not favor it. Bridges stood up and led his twenty or so delegates from the hall with other delegates shouting, "We'll be with you soon." Bridges's opponents had been shamed into silence by his magnificent statement of the longshoremen's and warehousemen's position. It was one of the most moving spectacles this writer has ever seen. It was heart-warming to watch this expression of genuine desire for labor solidarity and support of a rank-and-file program on the part of the council delegates whose will was blocked by reactionary misleaders of labor.

The next place to which the teamsters carried their fight was the convention of the State

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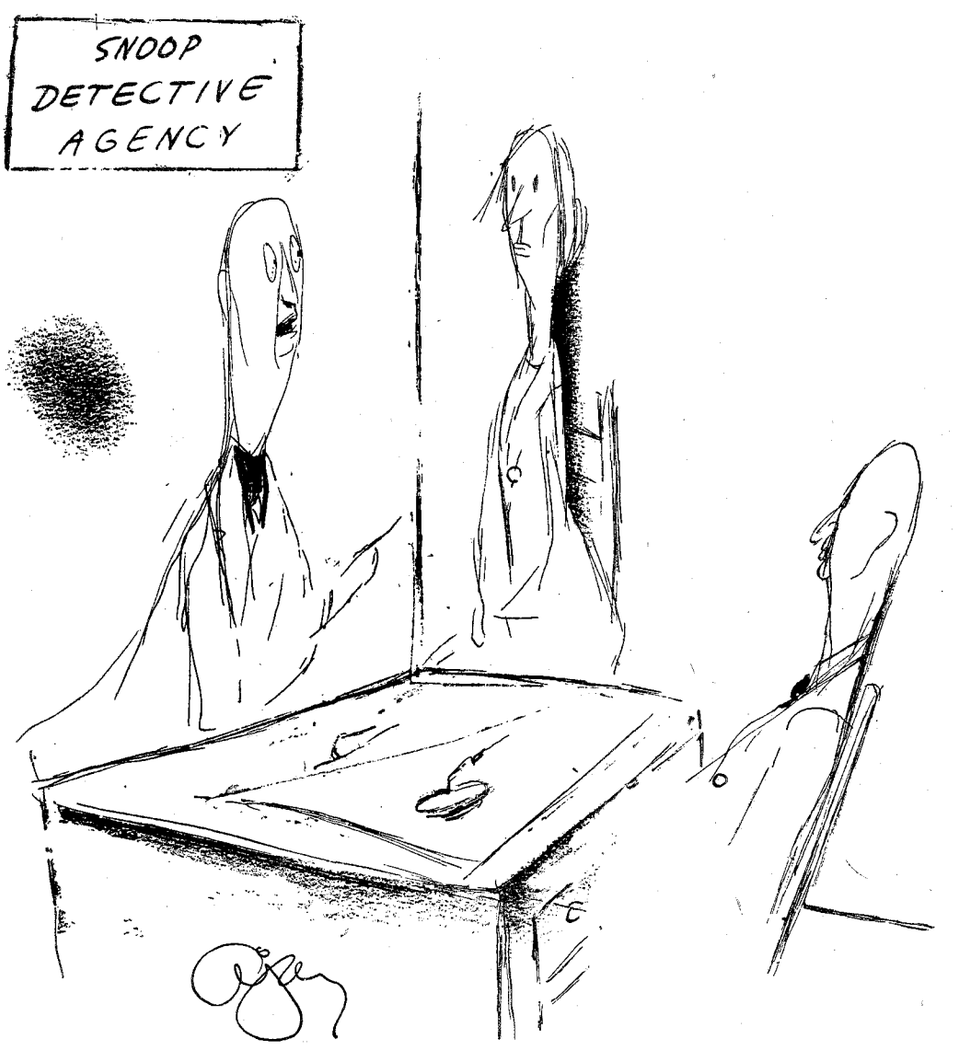
bor at Long Beach on September 13 and days following. Longshoremen, warehousemen, and other progressive unions had been "purged" from the Federation by Secretary Edward Vandeleur, as corrupt and disgusting an individual as has ever fastened his tentacles on the labor movement. He had already been deposed as president of the San Francisco Labor Council and ousted from his own union, the street carmen, but held his job as secretary of the State Federation by collaboration with other reactionary union officials. Not content with purging progressive unions out of the Federation on the excuse that they were part of the "Communist-C.I.O. combine" (which includes all unions which will not stomach teamster autocracy and gangsterism), Vandeleur affiliated to the Federation fake unions which would give him unquestioned control of the organization.

This packed convention adopted teamster resolutions promising full support of their war on the I.L.W.U., and bitterly, hatefully attacked the I.L.W.U. in general and Harry Bridges in particular. The Federation's pronunciamentos could have been written by the Industrial Association. Not content with this action, teamster thugs and gangsters set upon and assaulted progressive delegates to the convention. Jack Shelley, progressive president of the San Francisco Labor Council, was frightfully beaten because he had dared in San Francisco to pursue an impartial program and refused to be dictated to by teamster officials. When the San Francisco *Chronicle* truthfully reported this incident and Shelley's and Kidwell's (progressive secretary of the Bakery Drivers of San Francisco, a teamster affiliate which also refused to accept dictation) walkout from the convention, J. W. Buzzell, secretary of the Los Angeles Labor Council, the Machiavelli who ruled the affair, announced: "I am sorry to have to admit the truth of the publishers' statement that when newspapermen join unions [Newspaper Guild], they can no longer write the news truthfully." And this was supposed to be the voice of labor in California. This is where the teamsters went for aid. The convention and the Federation are in disrepute throughout California. The beating of Shelley took away the last bit of respect the Federation and the teamsters could muster, even from the conservative unions.

Now the teamsters, driven to desperation because their fiats, proclamations, and attempted blockade of the port of San Francisco for the past three weeks have not prevented cargo from moving, have sent "pickets" down to the Embarcadero to keep longshoremen and maritime workers from working the ships. Although trucks have stayed away from the front the past three weeks, longshoremen still work at about 90 percent of normal capacity. The weakness in the teamsters' attempted embargo is the Belt Line Railroad which moves along the entire length of the waterfront. Goods are loaded off ships into freight cars, and then sent up to the local warehouses on spur tracks. The only groups suffering are the teamsters whose jobs were thus taken away, and the Draymen's Association whose business was taken away. The latter group which had permitted the teamsters to violate their contracts with them in order to wage this holy war were now worried because they saw their business slipping away. Teamster officials promised to stop the railroad shipments in order to protect the draymen, but the railroad cars are still moving freight, and teamster drivers and draymen members are still holding the sack. A further element which keeps the port of San Francisco open is the fact that there is a great deal of trans-shipment out of the city. Goods are loaded from ships directly into freight cars for country points, and vice versa. Even Dave Beck, when questioned about freight movements at the time the embargo was declared, admitted he did not know how this would affect the teamsters' program. Apparently, it has just about licked the teamsters.

So now teamster officials have ordered their men to picket. Bewildered teamsters, under fear of losing their union books if they refuse to obey orders from higher up, are picketing the docks. This writer went down to the front to talk to them and found this expression from a teamster picket a very common one: "I've got no beef with the longshoremen and they've got none with me. I know half the guys in the longshore gang that just walked through the picket line. They're my friends and I'm their friend. I don't know what this is all about." The attitude of their own men will lick the teamster officials. In Oakland, across the bay, three hundred rank-and-file teamsters have bolted the leadership. Even if the teamster officials succeeded in getting the warehousemen into the teamsters' union, that would not benefit the rank and file of the teamsters one iota, and they are beginning to realize it. Meanwhile, many teamsters are out of work and beginning to suffer from loss of pay. Small benefits from the local aren't helping very much either. The teamster officials are in an untenable position. They cannot hold their membership with such a completely unjustifiable policy for long, even with their program of terrorism.

From other sources, also, teamster officials have received setbacks. There has been a phony group of officials in several of the maritime unions opposed to Bridges which has been collaborating with the teamster officials. The program was to set up a maritime federation in opposition to the present one and fight Bridges and the C.I.O. waterfront movement. Included



A. Ajay

"Mrs. Schmaltz hasn't seen her husband since last Tuesday. She thinks maybe he was absorbed by private industry."

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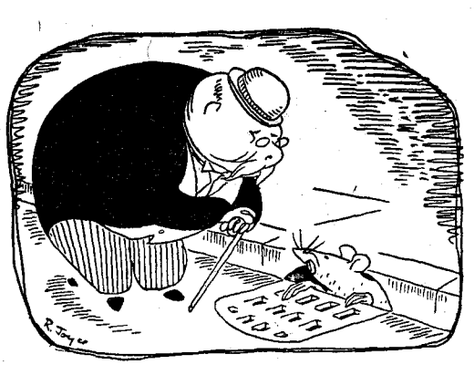
in this group are Ferguson of the marine firemen and Lundberg of the sailors. Also in appearance have been Bill Lewis, Paddy Morris, "Dirty" White, and other discredited former officials of the longshoremen who were ousted by the present rank-and-file-controlled union. It is the plan of this group to split "loyal" A. F. of L. men away from the I.L.W.U. But so far the splitting effort has failed. In San Pedro, where the phonies attempted to start their program, a great demonstration of longshoremen pledged unified support to the C.I.O. and promised to stick together to lick the teamster officials and their waterfront henchmen. Within the last few days Ferguson has been suspended by his union for falsifying union books and attempting to pack a meeting. In a dramatic move, Harry Bridges appeared at the marine firemen's meeting and exposed Ferguson who ran screaming from the hall.

But the most amazing and significant action of all was that of the Sailors' Union. Because Lundberg of this union hates and opposes Bridges, teamster officials counted on sailors to refuse to man the ships. Lundberg was willing to coöperate and promised to fight the longshoremen and respect the teamster "picket" lines. But a special meeting of the Sailors' Union on September 23 decided to walk through the picket lines because they were not legitimate and no strike existed. Sailors came running out from their meeting in great excitement, shouting, "The Maritime Federation will stick together. The sailors are with the longshoremen. We'll show them." Clay Street, where the maritime union halls are, was the scene of great excitement, with sailors and longshoremen clapping each other on the back. This action, more than anything in weeks, has done much to solidify the ranks of the maritime workers. The Sailors' Union officials who burned the favorable C.I.O. vote of several weeks ago will now be forced to take another vote, and the sailors should join forces with the C.I.O. The same is true of the marine firemen, who are not voting for C.I.O affiliation. All the waterfront unions, therefore, except the Masters, Mates, & Pilots, will be in the C.I.O. On the Pacific Coast, that means a total C.I.O. membership of forty thousand from these unions.

Teamster officials have thus been unable to split the ranks of the waterfront workers. Their effort to collaborate with Lundberg and Ferguson has boomeranged. Their "picket" lines, so-called, have been merely a display of stupidity. The longshoremen have sent sound trucks down to the front and explained to the teamsters that there is no strike, no dispute between the rank and file of the two unions, and no reason for the teamsters to either picket or be out of work. Several teamster spokesmen argued that they were "fighting communism," and being "loyal to the A. F. of L.," but offered no answer to the longshoremen's questions of whether there was a strike or whether they had any quarrel with the employers or the longshoremen. Bewildered and confused by the situation, the rank-and-file teamsters are fraternizing with the longshoremen. Now, bulldozed by their officials, the teamsters' membership cannot be kept out of work indefinitely by the suicidal program of their power-drunk officials. Soon there will be a revolt of the membership which will spell finish for Dave Beck, John McLaughlin, Joe Casey, et al.

Several other setbacks have come to teamsters in recent days. Monsignor John A. Ryan, speaking at Labor Day mass, said of McLaughlin's announced "fight to a finish": "All this talk of fighting to a finish is un-Christian. It leads nowhere. You cannot fight to a finish. You only leave a legacy of hate. What we need right now between the two labor organizations are charity, patience, and humility." And then this telling observation, "Such terms as 'Communists' and 'Reds' among laboring men is deplorable. Sometimes it seems the easiest way to dispose of a man is to call him a Communist." The Irish Catholic leaders of the local teamsters' union had no answer to the words of the respected priest. Father Ryan's speech was printed and distributed by longshoremen amongst San Francisco teamsters.

And from the National Labor Relations Board came a ruling that there could be no question that the I.L.W.U. represented the warehousemen. For days the I.L.W.U. demanded that the teamster officials agree to an election to determine what the workers in question wanted. McLaughlin refused, knowing that the teamsters would meet with defeat: "Why should we have an election when we had no hand in organizing these workers? We're not interested in an election. All we're interested in is the jurisdiction of these men, which was granted to us by the A. F. of L." On petition by the longshoremen, the N.L.R.B. ruled at Washington that there was no need for an election because: (*1*) the I.L.W.U. represents a majority of the employees; (*2*) the employers have recognized and entered into contracts with the I.L.W.U. as representatives of the workers in question; and (*3*) neither the teamsters nor any other organization except the I.L.W.U. claims to have members among these workers or to have been designated by them for the purposes of collective bargaining. This should have settled the question in favor of the I.L.W.U.; and so editorialized the San Francisco *News* and the *Chronicle*. Hearst's papers were strangely silent, because he has been one of the powers behind the teamsters. Instead, McLaughlin fumed that the N.L.R.B. decision was meaningless. But the anarchistic statement was reserved for William Green who thus defied the board: "The A. F. of L. awarded jurisdiction over these employees to the teamsters. No decision made by any governmental boards will alter our position in this matter."



Robert Joyce

"I pay men two dollars a day and rats fifteen."

Meanwhile, there seems to be a rift in the ranks of the employers. Recently there was formed in San Francisco the Committee of Forty-Three to "preserve industrial peace." Preaching these hypocritical proclamations were such "friends of labor" as Fleishhacker, Crocker, McBean, Kingsbury, Koster, Maddux, and other pillars of the Industrial Association. Shortly after this committee was formed, the teamster officials started their "fight to a finish." The alliance between these industrialists, the Draymen's Association, and teamster officials is so apparent that there can be no question that it exists. If the employers could smash the rank-and-file unions on the waterfront, all of them would unquestionably stand by the teamster officials who are waging this crusade. But the maritime unions have shown themselves to be too strong. Many ship operators are just recovering from the past strike. They want peace on the waterfront and they have at last been convinced that the maritime unions are here to stay. They are not in favor of this current war on the unions. Only the group of diehards composed of the men listed above want to carry on the fight. They still have not learned their lesson. But unable to get the complete support of all the employers, and the teamsters' campaign of union-busting having proceeded for more than three weeks now without any success, the Committee of Forty-Three program can meet only with failure.

WHAT happens in the next few weeks in this teamster officials-longshoremen struggle will indicate the outcome of the A. F. of L.-C.I.O. battle for supremacy on the West Coast. The longshoremen are the front-rank fighters in the C.I.O. unions, and teamster officials are directing the A. F. of L. forces. The longshoremen speak for the rank and file, the teamster officials for the bosses. More than anything else, this whole affair proves the continued function of the A. F. of L. as a union-busting, labor-splitting, strikebreaking agency. That has been its role since the formation of the C.I.O. and will be its principal activity until the membership of the A. F. of L. pulls the props from under the fifteen old men of the executive board and their various lieutenants like Dave Beck. On the West Coast everything points to a complete C.I.O. victory. The pull is a hard one, but the rank and file is confident. C.I.O. membership is increasing rapidly, unorganized workers are being brought into the C.I.O., and C.I.O. councils are being formed up and down the coast. Enthusiasm and spirit is high, and although temporary setbacks occur, there can be no question about the ultimate outcome.

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READERS' FORUM

Exposing slanders on the U.S.S.R.—Further comments on Isadora—Censorship of the airwaves—A letter from England

TO THE NEW MASSES:

It was a delight to see your editorial "Misrepresenting the U.S.S.R.," by a simple reference to several leading Soviet papers, expose Mr. Harold Denny's vicious nonsense, in the New York *Times*, concerning the disappearance of the word "Communism" from the Soviet vocabulary and the goal of Communism from the Soviet political program.

Now, to confute the NEW MASSES, Mr. Denny should produce samples of leading New York, London, Paris, and Berlin (especially Berlin) papers, with circulations as large as those of *Pravda, Izvestia,* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda,* containing expressions of Communist ardor as stirring and convincing as those cited in your editorial. Unless Mr. Denny can produce such evidence, how can he expect intelligent people to place any credence in his assertions that "one hears much less of Communism in Moscow than in New York, Berlin, London, and Paris."

But perhaps Mr. Denny does not address himself to intelligent readers after all. He knows his paper; he knows its owners; he knows what is wanted of him. It is quite obvious that Mr. Denny is in Moscow with the express purpose of counteracting the reports of Walter Duranty. Not that the latter's interpretations are always sound. Still, even at their worst they are superior to anything put out by the other bourgeois journalists in Moscow. The man is alive. He has vision. He can write. His prestige is tremendous. His articles on the U.S.S.R. draw thousands of readers to the New York *Times*. Insofar as that is true, Duranty is a great asset to his paper. On the other hand, he is also a major nuisance; for his influence, from the point of view of his capitalist employers, is, on the whole, outrageously, revoltingly, most deleteriously pro-Soviet. What to do? As the Polish saying has it: "Disgusting to eat, yet a pity to throw out." And so, the owners of the *Times* must have decided that, under the circumstances, the best thing was to neutralize Duranty by Denny—a gentleman who understands his role and valiantly endeavors to play it.

And the role is not an exceptionally difficult one. The formula has been worked out by many of Mr. Denny's bourgeois predecessors and colleagues, and perfected by the editors of the New York *Times*. This formula has been kindly disclosed to the public by Harry Gannes of the *Daily Worker*. It is as follows:

Take a few selected truths which cannot be denied anyway; mix liberally with the distortions and slanders you want to color your story; shake well so that the concoction is completely scrambled; spread on the first page; add the appropriate headlines; and dish the whole thing up to your readers as an "exposé."

New York. EMIL CONRAD.

Tamiris on Gold on Duncan

TO THE NEW MASSES:

As one of the dancers in the revolutionary field today, I was happy to see an article devoted to Isadora Duncan in the NEW MASSES [Sept. 28]. Her philosophy, her affirmation of life, her vision of an America free, dancing, has been the springboard for my own dance. I have acknowleged my debt to her in speech, in writing, and by continuing to fight for a better world. She belongs in your magazine, but I was distressed at the note that was struck throughout Michael Gold's article.

Michael Gold in his eagerness to point to Isadora as an inspiration of democracy, as the initiator of the revolutionary tradition in the dance, has failed to see where the younger generation of dancers fits into the long chain of development of an art that has only become part of the life of the general public through the creative work of dancers in the past ten years.

It is true that a good number of dancers today are continuing "the geometrical contortions of the post-war Dadaists." However, to condemn the entire revolutionary development because of certain tendencies in it is certainly not the way to encourage our artists and our audience in the revitalized art of the dance. Here it is worth noting that elements outside the revolutionary field have responded to the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist compositions of contemporary dancers.

Although it is difficult to speak of one's own work, certainly no one can say that the *Walt Whitman Suite, Momentum,* and *How Long Brethren?* are put into "strange and alien molds." Our effort is to relate form and subject material. Therein lies our creative labor. In Isadora's day people could have called her interpretations of music, her technique, her costumes, "strange and alien"—and they did! . . .

May I suggest that Michael Gold, to make up for his lack of familiarity with the new works, give himself the opportunity of seeing them and help us to build greater audiences for the dance and for the movement?

New York City. TAMIRIS.

Another Comment

TO THE NEW MASSES:

May I, as a close friend and devoted admirer of Isadora Duncan thank Mr. Gold for his splendid article in the Sept. 28 issue of the NEW MASSES? She herself, I know, would have admired its justness and fine simplicity. And with the lively drawings of Walkowitz, these two pages are indeed a beautiful memorial to a great artist who was also a great American and a high-hearted revolutionary.

New York City. ALLAN ROSS MACDOUGALL.

And Still Another

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The implication in Mr. Owen Burke's letter that the technique of Isadora Duncan has something romantically bourgeois in it while the modern technique of the young revolutionary dancers has something intrinsically revolutionary in it is laughable when one remembers that two of the foremost exponents of the modern techniques are Mary Wigman, an official Nazi dance instructress, and Harald Kreutzberg who represented the Nazis in the German festival at Paris this summer; while on the other hand Isadora Duncan went to Russia during the most trying days of the revolution and became the official teacher of dancing under the Bolsheviks.

New York City. RAYMOND DREW.

Helen Ludwig

P. S. Incidentally the fact that Kreutzberg acted as an ambassador of Nazi culture by taking a prominent part in the German Festival Week at the Paris exposition this summer should be sufficient reason to boycott his coming New York performances.

Squelching a Broadcast

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Gordon Herriot, that brilliant and informative radio commentator whose aggressive advocacy of democracy and liberalism have earned him the attention of progressives, has been speaking daily at 6:45 on WNYC, New York's municipal station.

Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 27 and 28, he failed to speak and nothing was said about his absence by the announcer. Accordingly I wrote to WNYC requesting information. Wednesday evening proved fruitful. At 6:45 the station declared that "In deference to the many friends of Gordon Herriot we wish to state that due to his lecture engagements Mr. Herriot can not speak over the air this week."

At 8:30 my phone rang. It was Gordon Herriot speaking. "I know of your letter to the station but they did not tell the real reason tonight. I've been fired—fired because WNYC is afraid to have me broadcast the truth."

This station is New York's own municipal radio station. Those people who have listened to Gordon Herriot's frequent exposes of reactionary activities in our country and abroad will realize that he must have stepped upon some prominent toes lately.

"What will you do, Mr. Herriot?" I asked.

"Plenty," he replied. "Sit tight and watch."

New York City. MAX ISENBERG, M. D.

Correspondents Wanted

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I have been a reader of the NEW MASSES only five weeks now, but you can bet I am going to continue being a reader. Your magazine has been a great help to me in explaining the fallacies of Ford's economic theories. I have lent my copies to various comrades, and you can take it from me that their opinions about the benefit of being a Ford employee have undergone a complete change.

I wonder if you will do me a favor. I should like to get in touch with a mine worker, preferably one with a family. I have a family of four girls and would like them to correspond with girls or boys of America. My girls are ten, thirteen, fourteen, and sixteen years of age respectively. Joan (sixteen) and Bessie (thirteen) go to high school; Mary (ten) is still going to elementary school but is expecting to sit for her high-school scholarship next year. Peggy (fourteen) refused further schooling and has started working in a clothing factory in Leeds.

I myself am forty-two years old. I am a coal miner. In politics I am a Communist. I wish to correspond with someone of my own age and am willing to exchange papers, pamphlets, and periodicals, etc. For instance I am a regular reader of our *Daily Worker* and the literary magazine, *Left Review*. I also buy pamphlets regularly. I will exchange these for anything in the same line. As a correspondent, I think I could fill a book as I am interested in a fair number of subjects—economics philosophy, psychology, literature, etc. Can you put me in touch with a comrade with similar tastes? I shall be very much obliged if you will.

15 Thompson Avenue, G. W. HOLLOWAY.
Edlington, Nr. Doncaster, England.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

The texture of French society before the Commune—Lorca's poems—Prison life and a strange conversion

WE have been led either to admire or to shudder at the almost morbid exclusiveness with which the Goncourt brothers, Jules and Edmond, of Paris, were preoccupied with the problem of rendering the surface of reality, its literal picturesqueness.

But we had never been warned that this singular absorption had given birth to results of remarkable quality. There has been in the assessment of the Goncourts a large amount of moralizing piety and, more recently, what I consider a mistaken kind of sociologizing superiority which reduced them to dilettantism.

Whatever we may think of their novels, which still have much of value though they have never succeeded in going beyond the limits of gorgeous *descriptions,* at least in their *Journal,** the private record of their opinions and experiences, we can examine with delight the evidences of an unusual quality of mind and feeling.

This nightly diary, recorded scrupulously and with heroic integrity, was made public in part after the death of the younger brother, Jules, in 1871, and has been available in French in the nine-volume edition since that time, although there are portions of the *Journal* which even to this day have been kept from the public eye. The present volume is a selection made from that part of the *Journal* written jointly by both brothers up to 1871, beginning with the *coup d'état* of Napoleon III and ending with the Paris Commune. It is to be hoped that the rest of it will be made available to English readers.

These accumulated notations give us a wonderfully vivid clue to the origins of that kind of self-conscious, daring, and dissolving speculation which has become the hallmark of the peculiarly modern and even decadent mode of feeling. These two vibrating "creatures" (the word is that of an English critic who disliked them) were remarkable for the fact that they deliberately set themselves the task of "exposing" the texture of French society. I say "texture" because it is this peculiar contradiction of their activity, that their novels, their public declarations, remain essentially surface documents, while their private probings are a triumph of truly social revelation. They achieved in their *Journal* what they sought, but failed to achieve, in their novels.

Night after night and year after year, they hastened home from their dinners, meetings, and collisions with the literary gods of their day (they hardly seemed to know anyone else) and, driven by an instinct to preserve and dissect, by their belief in the preciousness of passing experience, they left a huge record which has become a gateway to a good deal of the thought of their time. Almost every figure in the turbulent literary and upper-class social currents of their day pops up in their *Journal*—Saint-Beuve, Zola, Merrimée, Baudelaire, Gautier, George Sand, with glimpses of Balzac and, later, of Turgeniev.

Unsparingly and accurately, they inform us of the platform from which they operate:

> I spew up my contemporaries. Today, in the world of letters, in the highest world of letters, judgment grovels on the ground, and conscience and opinion have crumpled. Life, the sky, the fortunes of our time, is so base, the air is filled with cowardice, the enervating habit of compromise is so universal, that at the first contact with society, the first rubbing up against the people in power, even the frankest and most irascible and most plethoric of men lose their feeling of revolt and are hard put to it not to think every success a thing of beauty.

Or their definition of the writer:

> The bearishness of the nineteenth-century man of letters is strange compared to the social life of the eighteenth-century writers, from Diderot to Marmontel. The middle classes of our time do not seek out the man of letters unless he is willing to play the part of a strange beast, a buffoon, or a guide to foreign cultures.

Obviously they knew the source of their own automatic misery. They dubbed their friend Gautier the "sultan of the epithet," and they themselves are skillful at this deliberately cultivated literary wit. They say of a certain lady that "the shadow of the savings account lay on her forehead"; of a certain gentleman that "he looks as if he were drawing up a lease." They saw in the French theater the "grafting of jingoism on eroticism." A writer produces a book, and "he must become the servant of the book, the lackey of its success"; and in that phrase the figure of a certain contemporary career-novelist leaps to the mind.

Their picture of Gautier, one of the many literary portraits woven into the *Journal,* is unintentionally the pitiful portrait of the man of genius, the litterateur, fleeing from his defeats as a whole man, a defeat inevitable in the society of the banknote, into the brilliant fantasies of *l'art pour l'art.* Gautier had once marched in the streets with the people protesting against the government; later he had built for himself the proud and arrogant seclusion through which the claws of poverty, however, always found a way:

John Heliker

> I've always had to think of the nosebag. I've been filling it for thirty years; father, sisters, children. If I had the bad luck to fall ill for a fortnight, we could still get along by moving out of the house. But if it lasted for six weeks, I should have to go to the charity clinic like anybody else.

Proud Gautier of the virile intelligence!

It goes without saying that eroticism finds an unimpeded welcome in their sensibility, of which it is an integral part. The subtlety of exploration in the interplay of sexuality, so painfully absent or so painfully present with our accepted middle-class writers who seem parochial beside them, is never strained, never distant at any given point of their activity, and is always informed with an uninhibited generalizing appreciativeness. "It is astonishing how we men, even when we do not wish or desire anything from a woman, are made happy by the occasional resemblance of that woman's friendship to love." Or Gautier's recorded remark, "I have never felt a particularly violent desire for the intimate gymnastic. It isn't that my constitution is weaker than the next man's; but I assure you that to give way to love once a year is quite enough. It leaves me completely self-possessed; I could solve mathematical problems while it is going on." They are capable of genuine feeling for the women they admire, and their exquisiteness of response makes revelations of a writer like James Farrell seem like the exuberances of a member of the Chicago White Sox away from the censorship of home. It is the difference between a genuine literary embodiment of character and a man who merely writes *publicity about* his characters.

They have been described as "masters of counter-revolution" by Dimier, a French critic of the Right, who has claimed them because of their wholesale rejection of the romanticism which followed like a torrent in the wake of the Great Revolution. It is happily true that they were not libertarian in the same way as Victor Hugo, for example, whose noble passion did not find anything more than rhetoric to express it. But their horror of bourgeois life led them to a nostalgic and futile admiration for the eighteenth century which, at least, had values independent of the stock-exchange, even though its special values had sources of corruption in other ways. A society based on commodity values cannot have any other values. If the Goncourt brothers couldn't see

---

* THE GONCOURT JOURNALS: 1851-1870, *by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. Edited and translated by Lewis Galantière. Doubleday, Doran, & Co.* $3.50.

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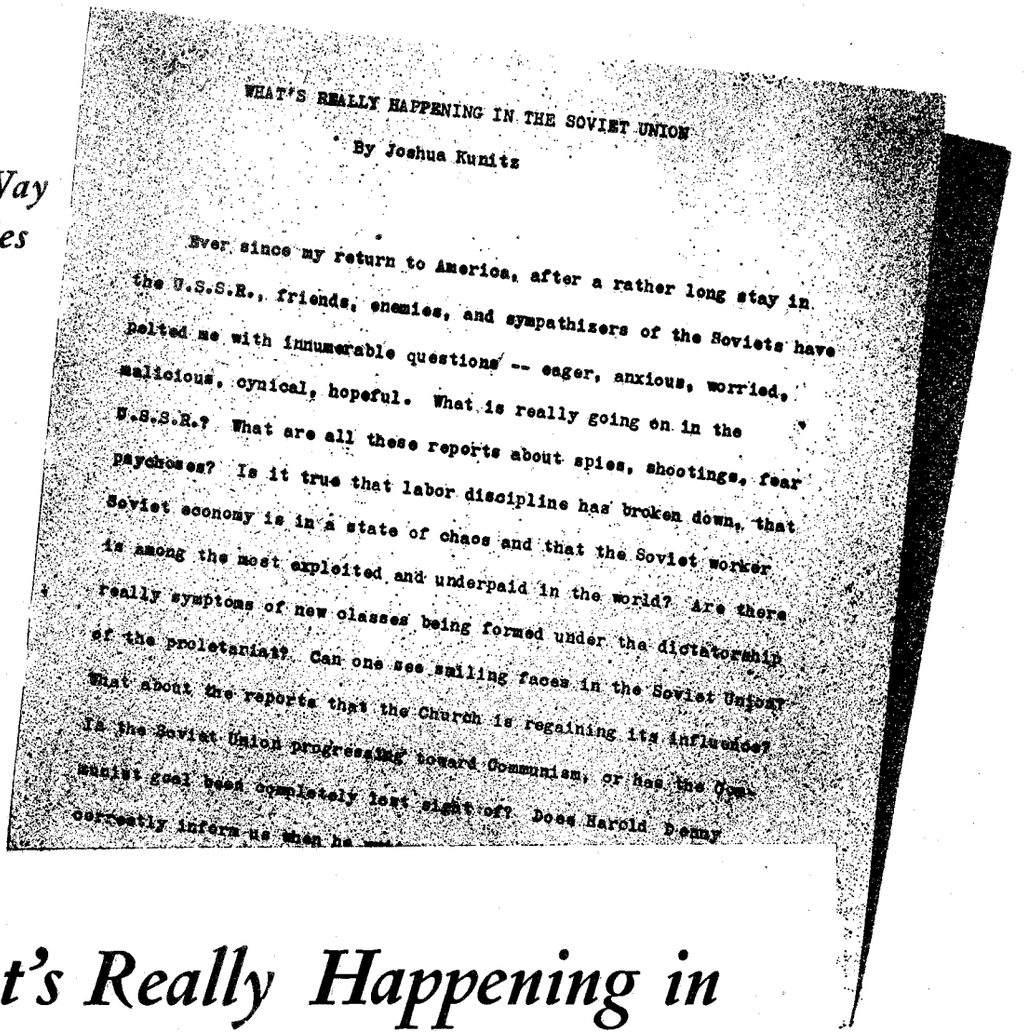

WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING IN THE SOVIET UNION

By Joshua Kunitz

Ever since my return to America, after a rather long stay in the U.S.S.R., friends, enemies, and sympathizers of the Soviets have pelted me with innumerable questions -- eager, anxious, worried, malicious, cynical, hopeful. What is really going on in the U.S.S.R.? What are all these reports about spies, shootings, fear psychoses? Is it true that labor discipline has broken down, that Soviet economy is in a state of chaos and that the Soviet worker is among the most exploited and underpaid in the world? Are there really symptoms of new classes being formed under the dictatorship of the proletariat? Can one see smiling faces in the Soviet Union? What about the reports that the Church is regaining its influence? Is the Soviet Union progressing toward Communism, or has the Communist goal been completely lost sight of? Does Harold Denny correctly inform us when he

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why this had to be in the way that Marx and Engels of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 saw it, theirs at least is the honor of feeling it. Their cult of the nerves, of which the more staid of bourgeois critics have made such a clamor, was in reality the expression of a sensibility continuously and horribly exacerbated by what they call in their *Journal* "the stupidities of the banknote." It is one of the curiosities of bourgeois criticism that it should be uncomfortable in the presence of this anti-bourgeois æstheticism and equally violent against the movement of modern writers toward some enrichment of their social intelligence.

But the final problem, which this shallow attitude cannot escape and which, for us, is the most fertile aspect of the Goncourts, is how such a studied æsthetic exclusiveness could have resulted in so penetrating a perception of the major realities, *the political and social realities,* of French society of the mid-nineteenth century. The Goncourts saw in Balzac the same triumph which Marx saw in him—that he saw deeper into French society than all the historians:

> Nobody has mentioned Balzac as a statesman, yet he was perhaps the greatest statesman of our time, the only one who got to the bottom of our ills, the only one who saw in perspective the disequilibrium of France from 1789—saw the manners that lay beneath the laws, the facts underlying the words, the unbridled interests beneath the seeming order, the abuses replaced by influences, the equality before the law annihilated before the inequality before the bench; in a word, the deceit of the program of the revolution of 1789 which has substituted five-franc coins for honorable names and put bankers in the place of noblemen—and has done nothing else.

This wonderful passage, a sheer triumph of social generalization, let us remember, is the result *not of a method of thought but of a mode of feeling.* That the Goncourts in penning this passage were deliberately vaunting the insight of the creative artist against the claims of the bourgeois social historian is proved by the fact that they concluded this passage with the sentence: "And it remained for a novelist to do all that," a sentence which the translator for some reason omits, blurring the purpose of the passage.

The Goncourts prove to us that once the unswerving integrity of a mode of feeling is maintained, and given the proper focus, the accumulated pressure of the feeling will yield distillations having social truth. They show us that the latter-day æstheticism of so many dilettantes who claim them as progenitors is a frivolous distortion of a serious mode of feeling, and our present superior historic insight must, on a higher leevl, find the path, not to an undefended, but to an all-welcoming sensibility.

In a revealing moment, they noticed in their *Journal* that "it is stupid to have convictions." If the Goncourts really suffered from the moral and intellectual nihilism which they sometimes believed to be the only human attitude, their interest for us would be less than it is. It was their indignation at the stifling moral atmosphere of bourgeois life which drove them to such extremities of complaint, and indignation is impossible without the outrage of assumed values.

Their failure, in a sense, was determined by the lack of any visible refuge other than a retreat to other historical periods. "We are the true exotics," they note, "for we have retreated not to another place, but to another century." That is why their indignation often simmers down to crankiness, why their genuine energy operates persistently from a purely passive center, and remains ineffectual, even though it glowed with a more than ordinary incandescence. MILTON HOWARD.

Salute to Tomorrow

LAMENT FOR THE DEATH OF A BULLFIGHTER AND OTHER POEMS, *by Frederico Garcia Lorca. In the original Spanish with the English translation by A. L. Lloyd. Oxford University Press.* $2.50.

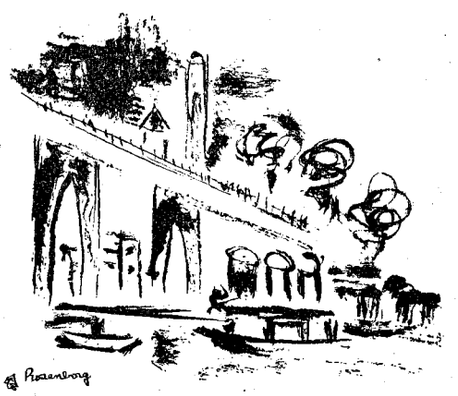
AMONG those who surmounted the post-war defeatism of their generation, Garcia Lorca is one who might have stood by the side of Rafael Alberti to celebrate the new man rising from the grim Spanish ordeal. But the fascists executed Lorca in 1936. The assassination of Lorca has imparted a significance to these poems that places them beyond even the realm of pure poetry:

> At five in the afternoon.
> It was exactly at five in the afternoon.
> A child carried a white sheet
> *at five in the afternoon.*
> A rush-basket of slaked lime
> *at five in the afternoon.*
> The rest was death and death alone
> *at five in the afternoon.*

and

> Autumn shall come with its snails,
> its grapes of mist and clustered mountains,
> but none shall wish to look into your eyes
> for you are dead for ever.

(The reviewer has been forced to retranslate in part the second quoted verse, as, unfortunately, Mr. A. L. Lloyd, far from keeping, as he states in his preface, "as close to the Spanish version as possible in sense and spirit," has interfered with the spirit unnecessarily—he seems especially prone to diminutives—and far from "keeping the meaning intact" has inclined, in the high and difficult places, to flatten it out.)



Rosenborg

The first poem in this beautifully printed book, the *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías,* was the last Lorca wrote, his own requiem. It belongs to the kind of poetry one does not forget for its austere music, its flame, and tenderness; but it is belittling to Lorca to call him "the greatest poet of twentieth-century Spain." His work deserves more discriminative analysis than that. In the sense that Alberti may be considered filtered light, Lorca was the flame itself. But the times when they came forward did not offer great subjects; and it is worth studying the effect upon these poets of Primo de Rivera's benevolent dictatorship. Alberti was writing about lime and angels then; while Lorca stuck to the gypsies—he had gypsy blood. In his work, as in Alberti's pre-civil war work, one finds an amazing though partial triumph of poetic vision over a historic moment of vacuum.

As Mr. Lloyd points out in his preface, Lorca's poems were "known and sung by the peasantry and the workers—even though they be in some cases entirely illiterate, and ignorant of the author's identity." The titles of his poems would scarcely suggest the kind of thing a poet would risk his life to go out and recite to a people in the throes of war; yet a reading of the poems themselves leaves one with that sense of discovery, of renewal, that only those can impart who believe in a new world and who are, in the test, willing to stand up with their lives for their belief. The burning of Lorca's writings in his native Granada may well serve as an unsentimental challenge to the sleeping-beauty intellectuals whose work is threatened with similar rude treatment. Lorca's assassination and the burning of his works only brand deeper the necessity today to speak up and act before it is too late. JENNY BALLOU.

Living Death

MUSEUM, *by James L. Phelan. William Morrow & Co.* $2.50.

IT IS one thing to have lived behind the bars. It is quite another thing to translate (successfully) that unforgettable experience into a form as tangible and as elastic as the modern novel.

James L. Phelan, the author of *Museum,* knows prison life. An Irish agitator, twice sentenced to death, he spent fourteen years in Dartmoor and Parkhurst. There he witnessed at first hand the insane cruelty, the slow, baffling torture which must come to every sensitive soul. Degrading sex perversions, the endless monotony of prison unemployment, companions thoroughly steeped in crime and brutality, such was the environment in which Phelan found himself. Here, surely, was stunning material for a magnificent novel of prison life.

Unfortunately, the author is not quite up to his material. His characters, with a few minor exceptions, are elusive and thin. None

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of them is full-bodied and few of them, the publisher's hysterical blurb to the contrary, are likely to be remembered by the reader.

It is only in the last few chapters that the novel—which carries with it obvious undertones of autobiography—loses some of its sluggishness and moves with dignity and understanding. Al Mansell, the protagonist of the story, is about to be released after serving sixteen years of a life sentence. Broken and embittered, he steps out into a society which is passively if not aggressively hostile to him. Dispiritedly, he drifts along the streets of London, sick with fear at a world that shrugs its shoulders at him. His hungry appeal for a job is curtly turned down. Always he is asked for references. The book closes as Mansell, bewildered and dejected, stumbles straight into the path of an incoming train.

In the capitalist scheme of things such an ending is, of course, inevitable. Unable to find work in a society which numbers its "honest" jobless in the millions, the criminal must inevitably return to a life of crime. For reasons of self-preservation he is compelled to seek the society of fellow criminals, for they are the only ones who understand his problems and are willing to give him the sympathy and understanding for which he hungers. It is quite probable that Mansell's accidental death prevented his return, sooner or later, to prison. That is the irony of Mr. Phelan's conclusion.

It is the impossibility of an ex-convict's adjustment to capitalist society which accounts for the alarming growth of repeaters. It is the increasing impossibility of effecting this adjustment which gives Mr. Phelan's novel whatever importance it may have.

PAUL SCHILLING.

Psychological Case History

THE MAN WHO STARTED CLEAN, *by T. O. Beachcroft. Harper & Bros. $2.50.*

A RARE case of double consciousness recorded in the literature of abnormal psychology is the foundation of this novel. In 1897 a man named T. C. Hanna fell headfirst from a carriage, lay unconscious, and upon opening his eyes a few hours later was discovered by horrified witnesses to have reverted to the state of a new-born baby. He had suffered a total loss of memory. He could not recognize his friends, or even people as people; he did not know spatial relations or appreciate time; he could not walk, dress, or eat; he could not talk or understand speech.

Using the wealth of material at his disposal in this case history, Mr. Beachcroft invents Edmund Thorne-Marten, the nephew of one of England's powerful business men, to take the place of Hanna. On the eve of his accident Edmund is briefly sketched as a complacent young executive, steadily climbing the financial ladder to the peak of prestige and power for his class, and always led by the hypocritical hand of his uncle.

Following the accident that causes total amnesia, Edmund's personality and mind begin to develop along lines that diverge widely

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from the direction given them by his class upbringing in the thirty years previous. Here one of the most interesting points in the book occurs. Edmund is not subjected to the influence of persons who are radical or even liberal. But the prejudices, biases, falsehoods, misinformation, and class conditioning that were so deeply etched on his mind before the accident are now wiped out, making it possible for his faculty of judgment and power of reasoning, which remain intact, to construct new ideas and theories based on the truths he discovers for himself. Edmund's development proceeds infinitely faster than a child's does, and soon he is a new person who perceives the rottenness of much of his world, recognizes its injustices, and is convinced that the only way out for him is to withdraw into as separate and independent an existence as possible.

Psychologists studying him know that the first Edmund has not actually been obliterated, but is really present subconsciously. By stimulating the functionally dissociated mental system, they are able, after a year has passed, to make Edmund's first personality emerge again, while the second disappears. The two alternate a number of times at lessening intervals, until finally the crisis occurs, the double personalities are bridged over, the gaps in memory filled in, and the two conflicting Edmunds are synthesized into one composite and normal man.

This new Edmund, realizing the impossibility of cutting himself off from a world in which all people, actions, and things are so completely interrelated, chooses to return to his uncle's business, with the intention of "making a decent job of it."

Such a resolution of the conflict between the two types the Edmunds represent is rather unsatisfactory. It suggests another Englishman muddling through somehow. You have a feeling that the man who started clean will end up dirty after all. Mr. Beachcroft has placed most of the emphasis on the psychological aspects of his key situation, and it is his sensitive, almost emphatic revelation of the strange history of Edmund that makes the book so extraordinarily engrossing. What weakens the book is the use of all the other characters as wooden props for Edmund, and the thin gruel served up by the author as the reconstructed Edmund's philosophy. If Mr. Beachcroft's social analysis were as penetrating as his psychological insight, *The Man Who Started Clean* would have been something more than a poetic translation of a scientific case study.

MILTON MELTZER.

★

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Maxwell Anderson's "Star Wagon" and some others—Prospectus of the W.P.A. music season

MAXWELL ANDERSON'S *The Star Wagon* is by all odds the most important and interesting play produced so far this season on Broadway, and stands head and shoulders above any of his last season's trio, *The Wingless Victory, The Masque of Kings,* and *High Tor.* It probes deeply and, in the main, honestly, into the major conditioners of American life since the turn of the century; it enriches with shrewd psychological insight characters which are (and ought to be) types; and it is vastly entertaining. Guthrie McClintic has wrung from it all its possibilities by employing brilliant direction, delightful sets by Joe Mielziner, and the talents of a splendid acting company headed by Lillian Gish, Burgess Meredith, and Russell Collins.

But a Maxwell Anderson play, we have all come to learn, is primarily an excursion into philosophy, and so it must be judged. *The Star Wagon* tells in outline the story of Stephen and Martha Minch, who married for love in 1902 and lived in corroding poverty because Stephen, by marrying Martha, had passed up his opportunity to be a capitalist. In the first act, time the present, Martha inveighs against their marriage and its consequences and wishes that she and Stephen had married otherwise and thereby had a happier life based on material wealth. This discussion makes Stephen and his crony and star boarder, Hanus Wicks, late for work, and they are fired. But not before they have put the finishing touches on Stephen's latest invention (his others have made his employers rich while he swinks on into old age at $27.50 a week), the Star Wagon, which can transport its "passengers" freely through time and space. Although Stephen rejects Martha's viewpoint by saying that it has been his work that was important to him, not the remuneration he received for it, his desire to give her what she wants persuades him to go back to the time before he married her and start life over. Back he goes with Hanus to 1902 and his bicycle repair shop and the village choir in which he sings with Martha. He falls in love with her all over again, but manages to resist her and marry the capitalist's daughter. Thence we see him grow into middle life, a corrupt, loveless, and unhappy rich man caught in the toils of finance capital. After he is forced to traduce his friend, Hanus, the two bring out the old time machine and fly back to the present of the first act. And presently there is a happy ending. It seems that in originally smuggling the Star Wagon out of the plant in the dead of night after Stephen and Hanus were fired, the burglars they had got to help them had made off with Stephen's rubber formulas, thus hamstringing the capitalist who had been paying Stephen $27.50 a week. The last scene sees the boss taking Stephen back at $200 a week as consulting engineer ("And no one to give me orders!") and Hanus at $50. Stephen is happy, Hanus is happy, Martha is happy, the capitalist is happy, and the audience is happy.

This makes it sound pretty awful, doesn't it? It is true that the play goes completely gutless in the last few minutes. Mind you, it could happen in real life. But what makes it gutless is that Anderson has raised some general and serious problems, which have interested him precisely because they are general and not exceptional. But suddenly they are solved on the basis of an exceptionalism: an inventor's indispensability because of unique personal qualifications. True, the exceptionalism was only one of three things that contributed to the happy ending; there was militancy and understanding (Stephen rejects the offer of a partnership and holds out for the proposition he wants), but exceptionalism was the key. Is this Anderson's answer to Martha's paraphrase of Marx in the first act: "I don't want you to explain things; I want you to change them"? And there is also the little unresolved matter of Stephen's being fed up with his boss because he was not permitted to develop a really good tire. ("The money in the tire business is in replacements, you fool!") Yet it is the formula for the inferior tire which the capitalist wants badly enough for him to take Stephen back on generous terms. Are we to suppose that Stephen's feeling for the integrity of his craftsmanship has suddenly evaporated? No, because the final act is a sort of celebration of the triumph of his integrity. The bad-tire business is an uncomfortable point; it is a point germane to the whole question of integrity and happiness under capitalism; it is significant earlier in the play, but Mr. Anderson cannot solve it honestly without socialist implications. He buries the issue. (And is there a kinship in content between this and the one nasty crack in the play, a jibe at the expense of W.P.A. workers, of the sort that graces Liberty Leaguers' after-dinner speeches? It may or may not comfort Mr. Anderson to know that the stuffed shirts in the orchestra applauded loudest at this point.)

Yet *The Star Wagon* for most its length is an indictment of industrial capitalism and a real study of its human consequences. It is also a warm and moving study of indigenous American life. It is very disturbing, when his stature as a playwright is so great, to see Mr. Anderson kidding himself with exceptionalist solutions of general problems. If he keeps on, he may well become the great American tragedy.

Dan Rico

The new offering of the W.P.A. theater in New York, *A Hero Is Born,* is amusing fairy-tale material enlivened by a modern point of view. Theresa Helburn, who wrote it from a story by Andrew Lang, rightly calls it an extravaganza. It is full of humor, color (Tom Adrian Cracraft's mounting is a continuous delight), and action. Firedrakes, seven-league-boots, caps of darkness, magic carpets, and other diversions are interlarded with satirical cracks on modern themes (the majesty of the judiciary, for one thing, is effectively lampooned) and some really clever songs. A. Lehman Engel wrote the pleasing music, and all around it is a very enjoyable enterprise.

French Without Tears is another smart British (oh, very!) comedy about nothing much which is chiefly distinguished by the presence of Frank Lawton, who seems to have a special talent for making something out of nothing. For a moment or two it seemed that he was going to be a militant anti-war young novelist, but that all disappeared in the mist of British brotherliness and slightly sexy spice and simple romance which are the main stuff of the play. Take a tip from the title: you'll be slightly annoyed at missing a lot of such fun as there is if you haven't an elementary knowledge of French. But you won't be missing very much at that. ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

CONCERT MUSIC

MORE than half the publicity material that is sent me is headed "W.P.A. Federal Music Project Department of Information." Most of the rest needs only a glance ("Richard Crooks, leading tenor of the Metropolitan Opera Association, will include a recital in Ottumwa, Ia., on his concert itinerary for this season. . . .") before it is filed in the wastebasket.

But the F.M.P. announcements and reports and programs can't be disposed of so easily. There aren't many of its concerts that I want to hear, but while I have never investigated the activities of the Manhattan Concert Band, the Gramercy Chamber Trio, the Negro Melody Singers, the Knickerbocker Dance Orchestra, *et al,* the mere fact that they exist, that they go on week after week, that in the course of a year they are heard by thousands of people (yet are almost completely ignored by the press and unblessed by critics) knocks steadily at the rim of my consciousness—and perhaps my conscience.

The reports I receive deal only with the F.M.P. in the vicinity of New York. All over the country the work of other branches and other ensembles goes on, ceaselessly, indefatigably, unsensationally. The thought holds for me the same horrible fascination as the microcosm presented by a drop of pond water under a microscope or—a better parallel—one of those "antoriums" where the life of an ant

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colony goes on, brisk and silent, under amused or momentarily observant eyes, until one day the water and food supplies are forgotten once too often and the little world ends, still voiceless and undramatic, leaving only a labyrinth of tunnels in the dry sand to mark the death of a very small but very real bit of life and civilization. That smacks of romanticism and in all likelihood it's easier to romanticize about the F.M.P. from reading its reports than from actually hearing its concerts. Yet all this busyness also marks the presence of life—hundreds of poor devils scrabbling tonal tunnels in the sand—and if the W.P.A. water stops, they die just as undramatically and just as surely.

The Federal Music Project is giving a living—at least of sorts—to thousands of Americans; millions of others are being influenced to some degree by its music making. It may be providing enjoyment and education; it may be a source only of boredom, but for better or worse it is doing something, it is impacting on many facets of a national consciousness. And we who report on the musical life of the country are largely ignorant of both the immediate and potential effects of that impact.

But I am supposed to be writing a forecast of the F.M.P. season, not a *J'accuse,* and it is much less disturbing to turn to specific announcements and to find that the ever-present Damoclean sword—the pink slip—has not prevented the F.M.P. from settling into its stride and achieving a better coördination of its multitudinous efforts. Questionnaires collected at many concerts and the box office appeal of various series (notably that devoted recently to Tchaikovsky when on several occasions the Federal Music Theater has enjoyed capacity audiences and even groups of standees) have shown the preponderance of interest in orchestral prgrams. They are to be emphasized this season without entirely neglecting chamber and choral music and opera.

The Composers' Forum-Laboratory enters on its third year with a somewhat altered—and improved—policy. Concerts will be given every two weeks instead of weekly (permitting more adequate preparation) and will feature orchestral works and more mature composers. The series was begun on October 8 with a Roy Harris program by the Federal Symphony Orchestra under Edgar Schenkman and will continue with concerts devoted to the works of Gardner Read (whose prize-winning symphony will be given its first performance by *Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic* Symphony this season) and Herbert Inch (October 20), Quinto Maganini (November 3), Edgar Stillman Kelley—commemorating his eightieth birthday (December 1), and Roger Sessions (January 5).

Lehman Engel's Madrigal Singers will alternate with the Forum-Laboratory on Wednesday evenings for twelve concerts beginning October 13 and promising the American première of Cavalieri's *Representation of Body and Souls;* first performances of modern works by Charles Ives, Virgil Thompson, and Nicholas Nabokoff; masses by Schubert and Haydn (with orchestra), Lassus and Pales-

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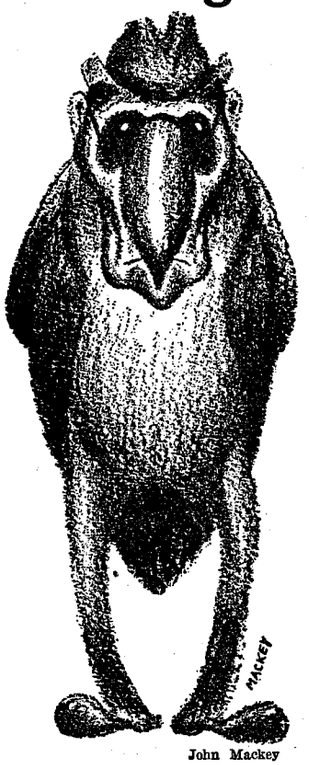

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trina (unaccompanied); cantatas by Buxtehude (whose three-hundredth anniversary has been otherwise singularly ignored in this country), and the usual madrigals and chansons, plus some sixteenth- and seventeenth-century chamber music.

A Thursday evening operatic series with soloists, chorus, and orchestra will present excerpts from the various national schools, Russian (October 7), Italian (October 14), French (October 28), etc. A Mozart program featuring the great *Requiem* will be given on October 21, and the series will conclude with a Christmas program on December 23. An alternate Sunday evening Beethoven orchestral series of six concerts, beginning October 17 with the first two symphonies and the fifth (Emperor) piano concerto, will include all nine symphonies, several concertos and overtures, and the seldom heard *Choral Fantasy,* Op. 80, for piano, chorus, and orchestra.

Turning from prospectus to performance I have recently received tangible evidence of the activity of another branch of the W.P.A., the Music Research Department of the National Play Bureau's publication (No. 25) *Folk Tunes from Mississippi,* collected by Arthur Palmer Hudson and edited by George Herzog. This is a mimeographed book with forty-five pages of music and twenty-two pages of introduction and notes, copies of which may be obtained for 25c each from 122 East 42nd Street, New York City. The tunes it contains were intended for inclusion in Professor Hudson's *Folksongs of Mississippi and Their Background* (University of North Carolina Press, 1936), but omitted from that book for the practical reasons that have so often prevented the full musical documentation of published folksong research. There's a lot of musical and musicological meat in this little work, but altogether apart from its own considerable value, it holds high significance as an indication and a promise of the incalculably valuable service this and other W.P.A. research bureaus can render to American music and music in America.

R. D. DARRELL.

★

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(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

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Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George Willner, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the Weekly Masses Co., Inc., publishers of New Masses, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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